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**THE  
GREAT TEXTS OF THE BIBLE**



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# THE GREAT TEXTS OF THE BIBLE

EDITED BY THE REV.

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"THE DICTIONARY OF CHRIST AND THE GOSPELS" AND  
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## I CORINTHIANS

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## THE POWER AND THE WISDOM OF GOD.

Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom : but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumblingblock, and unto Gentiles foolishness ; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.—1 Cor. i. 22-24.

THIS chapter is full of the tragic pathos of the Apostle's life. We can read, as it were between the lines, the emotions, the hopes, the despairs, the fears, the loves, amid which he preached in Corinth, confronted by the hate of the Jew and the scorn of the Greek, and beset by the jealousies, the divisions, the misunderstandings, of his heathen and Hebrew converts.

St. Paul when he arrived in Corinth was not new to the work and the troubles of the missionary. Behind him were years of labour and sorrow. The man of Macedonia who appeared in a vision had cried, "Come over and help us"; and to St. Paul to hear was to obey. He landed at Philippi, bringing westward and into Europe the gospel of Christ. But love did not leap to answer his love, or faith rise to salute his coming. Instead, he was beaten, smitten with stripes, set in the stocks, made fast in the inner prison, till the virtue of his Roman citizenship opened the door of his prison, and he passed on to Thessalonica. There "lewd fellows of the baser sort" set the city in an uproar, and he was forced to depart for Berea. In Berea he found men nobler than those of Thessalonica ; for they searched the Scriptures to discover whether his words were true. But enmity followed and drove him to Athens, where he felt the wondrous charm of the city and the wondrous indifference of the men. Images of gods were everywhere, but nowhere was the living God or godly peace of soul. The men wanted news, not of the kind he preached, but of the sort that was curious rather than true. So they set him on Mars' hill, and as he unrolled his

burden—told of their blind quest after God, and God's ceaseless quest after them—they listened till he came to speak of resurrection and judgment. And then, offended rather than amused, they broke in and said, "We will hear thee again of this matter." And so he had to forsake cultured Athens, and make for busy Corinth.

And now, as he writes, the antagonisms and the victories of those early days in Corinth come back to him. His mingled feelings are represented by a series of contrasts. First, he contrasts the hearers who were hostile to his preaching (the Jews and the Greeks) with those who accepted it (the "called"). Next, he contrasts the message he had to deliver (a crucified Christ) with the expectations of those hearers who asked for signs and sought after wisdom. Then he contrasts the estimates formed of that same message—a "stumblingblock" and "foolishness" to those who were asking for signs of power and wisdom; the "power and wisdom of God" to those who believed. The subject accordingly is St. Paul's preaching, and we have three natural divisions.

- I. The Hearers.
- II. The Message.
- III. The Reception of the Message.

## I.

### THE HEARERS.

What the city of Corinth was we know; it was rich, luxurious, commercial, lascivious. East and West met in it, and mingled their vices and their faiths. Thither had come the Jew, and built his synagogue, opened his bazaar, made a place for himself on the exchange, and used his knowledge of the Eastern men and markets to bring their wares and their ways to the men of the West. There, too, was found the Greek, subtle, full of the pride of race and intellect and achievement, speculative, argumentative in his very commerce, and beating out in the manner of the Schools the questions connected with the principles and profits of trade. There, too, was the Roman, with the spirit of the soldier who had become sovereign, scornful of the poor civilian and the mean merchant, thinking the world had



been made to be conquered, and he to be its conqueror. And in the face of this mixed and divided community St. Paul preached. You can imagine him, after a day's hard toil at his handicraft, in the evening stealing along the quay, watched by few, cared for by fewer, a man who could not be conquered, and who had in him vaster ambitions for the good of men than could find room in the mind of imperial Cæsar. And if you had followed him you might have seen him climb by a mean stair to a meaner upper room, where the slave, set free for an hour by his master, or the wharfinger escaping from loading or unloading his ship, or the porter seeking release from the burden he had carried throughout the day, met to hear this preacher, mean in appearance, but great in dignity and in power.

¶ The education of the human race has been an affair of unconscious co-operation. One department of it has been put out to one race, another to another. For illustration look at Athens and then at Jerusalem. In Greece we find the first-class minds of the ancient world. Thales, Pythagoras, Democritus, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Pheidias, Praxiteles, Archimedes, Thucydides are, in their several ways, prophets of the intellect. They stand for philosophy, physics, mathematics, art, music, politics, the whole sphere of things with which the mind can busy itself. They are the pioneers of research, openers of the ways in which truth-seekers have been travelling ever since. When you pass from Greece to Palestine you find yourself in another world. Open on Isaiah or Micah, read the New Testament from cover to cover, and you will find scarce a word about mentality. There is nothing about philosophy, or geometry, or music, or painting, or the science of history, or the science of politics. If you kept to the Bible, you would learn nothing worth knowing about the physical universe; no hint of the methods by which its secrets are to be disclosed. Summing the two up, you may say: Greece is all for knowledge; Palestine is all for character. We are learning to-day the immeasurable debt we owe to both. When you ask, "Which is the mightier; which the more important?" Huxley's statement ("clever men are as common as blackberries; the rare thing is to find a good one"), remembering what he stood for, may well set us thinking.<sup>1</sup>

The Apostle divides the ancient world into two classes of men: those whom God has taken under His direction and

<sup>1</sup> J. Brierley, *Life and the Ideal*, 57.

enlightened by a special revelation, *the Jews*; the others whom He "has left to walk in their own ways," the Gentiles, designated here by the name of their most distinguished representatives, *the Greeks*. Each of these groups has its demands, and the demands are different.

i. *Jews.*

"Jews ask for signs."

As proof that God was in their midst and as a revelation of God's nature, the Jews required a sign, a demonstration of physical power. It was one of Christ's temptations to leap from a pinnacle of the Temple, for thus He would have won acceptance as the Christ. The people never ceased to clamour for a sign. They wished Him to bid a mountain be removed and cast into the sea; they wished Him to bid the sun stand still or the Jordan retire to its source. They wished Him to make some demonstration of superhuman power, and so put it beyond a doubt that God was present.

1. Signs were suggested to the Jewish mind whenever that people thought of the past history of their nation. Almost every page of their sacred books spoke of signs either past or to come. Their faith had signs for its surest proof. Their greatest men had exhibited most startling signs. Those epochs to which they looked back with most pride were marked by a greater display of signs. And so it was no wonder that with the advent of the Messiah they expected signs in greater number and of more surpassing brilliancy than ever before.

2. Indeed they had signs in exceeding plenty, and of a character such as, from the past history of their nation, they might have expected. Jesus Christ of Nazareth confined His miracles to no one district, to no one section of the Jewish race above another. Everywhere, before all the people, He did wonders, which in number, power, and beneficence surpassed anything of the kind that had ever occurred in their history. These miracles, indeed, were so many signs from heaven to them, but they were not signs to their mind. They really did not know what they would be at. They wanted signs, and yet more signs! For it is of the nature of this desire to rise higher and

higher in proportion as it is satisfied. On the morrow after the multiplication of the loaves the multitudes ask: What signs doest thou then? Every stroke of power must be surpassed by a following one yet more marvellous.

¶ There is in the farther course of some Christians that which is the counterpart of the Slough of Despond at the commencement of it. There were cartloads of Gospel encouragements cast into the Slough of Despond, and yet it was the Slough of Despond still; and so into this there are carted distinctions and marks of saving grace, yet it remains the counterpart of the Slough of Despond still. There is no dealing with such persons; for if you give them signs of grace, they will ask for signs of the signs.<sup>1</sup>

3. The Gospel, now as then, has to encounter the demand of those who ask for signs. Do we not see the craving for the sign—for the display, that is, of supernatural power to crush and silence all doubt resulting in the superstitious corruptions of Christianity? For what is superstition but an appeal from wisdom to power, an effort to silence the reason by the terrors of the senses? The demand for a religion which shall dispense with the exercise of reason and the discipline of thought is ever punished by belief in a religion which outrages all reason and, at last, silences all thought. Superstition is still the Nemesis, not of faith, but of unbelief. And every such superstition necessarily grows always grosser and darker as it grows older. For the desire of the teacher for power, combining with the desire of the taught for certainty, must tend always to efforts at making the sign, which is to secure both, still more awful and convincing, by still greater and more awful attestations. A fresh miracle must be provided to silence each fresh heresy, a new prodigy to confirm each new dogma.

¶ When Carlyle said of God, the God in whom Christians believe, "He *does* nothing," he gave expression to precisely this mental temper. It is the temper of all to whom it is a religious difficulty that there is a constitution and course of nature and of human life in which things go on according to general laws, and in which there is much that is baffling, mysterious, and unjust. If we are to believe in God, they say, let Him do something.<sup>2</sup>

¶ The Jews asked for signs, a request which is not necessarily indicative of a thirst; it may be an asking behind which there is

<sup>1</sup> "Rabbi" Duncan, in Brown's *Memoir of John Duncan*, 426.

<sup>2</sup> J. Denney, *The Way Everlasting*, 14.

no parched and aching spirit. That is the bane and peril of all externalism. It may gratify a feverish curiosity without awakening the energies of a holy life. The Jews asked for signs. "Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad," for he hoped to see a sign. It was a restless curiosity, itching for the sensation of some novel entertainment; it is not the pang of a faint and weary heart hungering for bread.—"He answered him nothing." The Jews asked for signs, a request which is frequently indicative of a life of moral alienation. Externalism abounds in moral gifts, and in externalisms men often discover drugs by which they can benumb the painful sense of their own excesses. "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign." They try to resolve into merely physical sensations and sensationalisms what can be apprehended only by the delicate, tender tendrils of a penitent and aspiring heart.<sup>1</sup>

¶ F. W. Robertson in his diary makes the following resolution: To endeavour to get over the adulterous-generation-habit of seeking a sign. I want a loud voice from Heaven to tell me a thing is wrong, whereas a little experience of its results is enough to prove that God is against it. It does not cohere with the everlasting laws of the universe.<sup>2</sup>

And not for signs in heaven above  
Or earth below they look,  
Who know with John His smile of love,  
With Peter His rebuke.

In joy of inward peace, or sense  
Of sorrow over sin,  
He is His own best evidence,  
His witness is within.<sup>3</sup>

## ii. Greeks.

"Greeks seek after wisdom."

The wisdom of which St. Paul speaks appears to have been of two kinds—speculative philosophy and wisdom of words, *i.e.* eloquence. The Greeks had deified *wisdom*. They wanted the Divine intellectualized in a system eloquently giving account of the nature of the gods, the origin, course, and end of the universe. This people, with their inquisitive and subtle mind, would get at

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Jowett.

<sup>2</sup> Stopford Brooke's *Life and Letters of the Rev. F. W. Robertson*, 73.

■ Whittier.

the essence of things. The man who will satisfy Greek expectation will be, not a miracle-worker, but a Pythagoras or a Socrates of double power.

1. Next to the Jews there was no people in the world that St. Paul knew better than the Greeks. He had in his lifetime come much in contact with them. He had, like all other men, wondered at their genius. There was no feature more distinctive of the whole people than their intellectual aptitudes, which they never lost. Everywhere they kept strong hold of their national traditions. Their language remained through ages uncorrupt and unmutilated. Much of their theology and culture was gathered from the Homeric poems, which were the heirloom of the whole race. They excelled in all the fine arts. They were masters in every branch of literature. "The Greeks," above every other people, "sought after wisdom." There could be nothing equal to that description in perspicuity and appreciation of national character. For the Greeks from hoar antiquity had been seekers after wisdom.

2. The Greek asked for no sign; he cared nothing for the supernatural, he had ceased to believe in it. He believed only in nature; he sought only for wisdom to understand himself and the world in which he lived; he asked from Christ only light on those problems in external nature, or in himself, on which his subtle mind was ever working. He wanted a perfect philosophy, or, at least, a perfect morality, which could justify itself to his intellect by solving all those difficulties which beset all other philosophies and all other systems of morals. Could Christianity do this? Could it tell him what was mind, and how it differed from matter? Could it tell him whether he was governed by fate or by free-will? Could it tell him whence came evil? If it could, he was willing to listen to it and to believe all that it could prove. But then for such teaching there was no need of miracles any more than there was for the teaching of geometry. All that was true in it he would receive on its own evidence, and he would receive nothing that did not so prove itself to be true.

3. From the earliest days of Christianity to our own, there have been those who, like the Greeks, demand a demonstration of religious truths not to the senses, but to the intellect, who ever



seek to divest Christianity of all that is mysterious or supernatural and to reduce it, as much as possible, to a purely natural religion, to something that can be weighed and measured by the understanding, or that approves itself to the feelings; to something, in short, that is self-evident to the natural man.

¶ There is, in our day, a marvellous idolatry of talent; it is a strange and a grievous thing to see how men bow down before genius and success. Draw the distinction sharp and firm between these two things—goodness is one thing, talent is another. It is an instructive fact that the Son of Man came not as a scribe, but as a poor working man. He was a teacher, but not a Rabbi. When once the idolatry of talent enters the Church, then farewell to spirituality; when men ask their teachers, not for that which will make them more humble and God-like, but for the excitement of an intellectual banquet, then farewell to Christian progress.<sup>1</sup>

¶ Artists have united with authors to strengthen this idolatry of intellect. One of the great pictures in the French Academy of Design assembles the immortals of all ages. Having erected a tribunal in the centre of the scene, Delaroche places Intellect upon the throne. And when the sons of genius are assembled about that glowing centre, all are seen to be great thinkers. There stand Democritus, a thinker about invisible atoms; Euclid, a thinker about invisible lines and angles; Newton, a thinker about an invisible force named gravity; La Place, a thinker about the invisible law that sweeps suns and stars forward towards an unseen goal. The artist also remembers the inventors whose useful thoughts blossom into engines and ships; statesmen whose wise thoughts blossom into codes and constitutions; speakers whose true thoughts blossom into orations; and artists whose beautiful thoughts appear as pictures. At this assembly of the immortals great thinkers touch and jostle. But if the great minds are remembered, no chair is made ready for the great hearts. He who lingers long before this painting will believe that brain is king of the world; that great thinkers are the sole architects of civilization; that science is the only providence for the future; that God Himself is simply an infinite brain, an eternal logic engine, cold as steel, weaving endless ideas about life and art, about nature and man. But the throne of the universe is mercy and not marble; the name of the world-ruler is Great Heart, rather than Crystalline Mind, and God is the Eternal Friend who pulsates out through His world those forms

<sup>1</sup> F. W. Robertson.



of love called reforms, philanthropies, social bounties and benefactions, even as the ocean pulsates its life-giving tides into every bay and creek and river. The springs of civilization are not in the mind. For the individual and the State "out of the heart are the issues of life."<sup>1</sup>

¶ A dour old Scot upon his deathbed was informed by his wife that the minister was coming to pray with him. "I dinna want onybody tae pray wi' me," said he. "Well, then, he'll speak words of comfort tae ye." "I don't want to hear words o' comfort," said the intractable Northcountryman. "*What do ye want, then?*" asked his wife. "I want," was the characteristic reply, "I want tae *argue*."<sup>2</sup>

### iii. Them that are Called.

St. Paul places this class of hearers in sharp contrast to all others. He forcibly separates the "called" Jews and Gentiles from the mass of their fellow-countrymen; to the called *themselves*, he says, as opposed to all others. The term "*called*" here includes the notion of *believers*. Sometimes "calling" is put in contrast to the acceptance of faith, as in Matt. xxii. 14, "Many called, few chosen." But often also the description "called" implies that of acceptor, as it certainly does here.

1. The Apostle exalts the *Divine act* in salvation; he sees God's arm laying hold of certain individuals, drawing them from the midst of those nationalities, Jewish and Gentile, by the call of preaching. St. Paul thinks of the constituent elements of which the church of Corinth was actually composed. These Corinthian Christians were of no account, poor, insignificant, outcasts, and slaves, friendless while alive and when dead not missed in any household; but God called them and gave them a new and hopeful life in Christ Jesus. It is plain that it is not by human wisdom, nor by power, nor by anything generally esteemed among men that we hold our place in the Church. The fact is that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." If human wisdom or power held the gates of the Kingdom, we ourselves would not be in it. To be esteemed, and influential, and wise is no passport to this new kingdom. It is not men who by their wisdom find out God and by their nobility

<sup>1</sup> N. D. Hillis, *The Investment of Influence*, 123.

<sup>2</sup> Arch. Alexander.

of character commend themselves to Him; it is God who chooses and calls men, and the very absence of wisdom and possessions makes men readier to listen to His call.

2. The people that are called are those who have heard the voice of God and *responded* to it. The old theologians distinguished between a general and an effectual calling. So far they were correct enough, but they erred in laying the cause of the distinction on God. There is no difference in the call. The difference lies in this, that in one case the heart responds to it, and in the other it does not. God never fails in anything He does, so far as His part of the work is concerned. God's call comes forth clear and strong, a great shout of power to the wide world, but only some respond and are raised to the power of God, and to the enjoyment of His life.

3. In St. Paul's day this argument from the general poverty and insignificance of the members of the Christian Church was readily drawn. Things are changed now; and the Church is filled with the wise, the powerful, the noble. But St. Paul's main proposition remains: whoever is in Christ Jesus is so, not through any wisdom or power of his own, but because God has chosen and called him. The sweetness and humble friendliness of St. Paul sprang from his constant sense that whatever he was he was by God's grace. He was drawn with compassion towards the most unbelieving because he was ever saying within himself, There, but for the grace of God, goes Paul.

I owned a little boat a while ago,  
And sailed a morning sea without a fear,  
And whither any breeze might fairly blow  
I'd steer the little craft afar or near.  
    Mine was the boat,  
    And mine the air,  
And mine the sea,  
    Not mine a care.

My boat became my place of nightly toil;  
I sailed at sunset to the fishing ground;  
At morn the boat was freighted with the spoil  
That my all-conquering work and skill had found.

Mine was the boat,  
 And mine the net,  
 And mine the skill,  
 And power to get.

One day there passed along the silent shore,  
 While I my net was casting in the sea,  
 A Man, who spoke as never man before ;  
 I followed Him—new life began in me.  
 Mine was the boat,  
 But His the voice,  
 And His the call,  
 Yet mine the choice.

Ah ! 'twas a fearful night out on the lake,  
 And all my skill availed not at the helm,  
 Till Him asleep I wakened, crying, "Take,  
 Take Thou command, lest waters overwhelm !"  
 His was the boat,  
 And His the sea,  
 And His the peace,  
 O'er all and me.

Once from His boat He taught the curious throng,  
 Then bade me let down nets into the sea ;  
 I murmured, but obeyed, nor was it long,  
 Before the catch amazed and humbled me.  
 His was the boat,  
 And His the skill,  
 And His the catch,  
 And His my will.<sup>1</sup>

## II.

### THE MESSAGE.

1. *Preaching*.—The clear, creative imagination of St. Paul could penetrate into the brain of the Roman and look through his eyes ; into the intellect of the Greek and judge with his cynicism ; into the spirit of the Hebrew and feel with his heart, or dream with his fancy. And as he looked at the men he could read their thoughts without the help of words, translating the scowl on the Hebrew's face into bitter speech, the scorn on the

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Richards.

Greek's lip into eloquent reproach. But though he knew the thoughts of the men he did not dare be silent in their presence. For God sent him to preach the Gospel, and he preached it possessed with the passion for souls that is the image in man of grace in God.

(1) "*But we preach.*" St. Paul refused to make any compromise. He was very clearly conscious of the two great streams of expectation and wish which he deliberately thwarted and set at naught. "The Jews ask for signs"—*but we preach Christ crucified.* "The Greeks seek after wisdom"—*but again, we preach Christ crucified.* To all their subtleties, whether of outward sign or of inward wisdom he opposed the simple fact of his preaching.

(2) "*We preach.*" The word "preach" is emphatic; it means in its full signification "to proclaim as a herald does." St. Paul proclaimed his Gospel simply as a *fact*. The Jew required a sign; he wanted a man who would do something. The Greek sought after wisdom; he wanted a man who would perorate and argue and dissertate. St. Paul says, "No!" "We have nothing to *do*. We do not come to philosophize and to argue. We come with a message of fact that has occurred, of a Person that has lived."

¶ Preaching is an institute peculiar to the Gospel. Nothing can be preached but the Gospel, so nothing can be done with the Gospel but preach it. It is not a mere law to be enjoined, or a philosophy to be developed by human thought, or a series of articles to be taught. In its naked essence, it is a fact of God's doing, a Divine datum, a salvation provided, stored, and offered in the person of a Saviour. As such, it is to be asserted, declared, published, heralded.<sup>1</sup>

2. *Preaching Christ.*—St. Paul proclaimed a Person, not a system of philosophy. We can adore a *person*, but we cannot adore *principles*. It is not merely Purity, but the Pure One; not merely Goodness, but the Good One, that we worship. Some of the Greek teachers were also teaching Purity, Goodness, Truth; they were striving to lead men's minds to the First Good, the First Fair. The Jewish Rabbis were endeavouring to do the same; but it is only in Christ that it is possible to do this effectually, it is only in Christ that we find our ideal realized.

<sup>1</sup> J. O. Dykes,

¶ Preaching Christ is not preaching about Christ. There is a well-known passage in the tenth chapter of Romans which gives a balanced account of the reason for the failure of so much preaching to produce any adequate or satisfactory results. The first part of the passage points to causes of failure in the preachers; the second half to causes of failure in the hearers. The great cause of failure in preachers is indicated in one of these opening interrogations as it is translated in the Revised Version. The old version, smoothing over a difficulty of translation, and giving not the actual sense of the words but what it was imagined St. Paul ought to have said and meant to say, reads thus, "How shall they believe in him *of whom* they have not heard?" Now the Revisers give us what St. Paul actually did write. "How shall they believe in him *whom* they have not heard?" You see there is a whole world of difference in the two phrases. According to the first one the difficulty of belief is that they have not heard about Christ; but according to the second it is that they have not heard Christ. According to the first the function of the preacher is to talk about Christ; but according to the second his function is to be a mouthpiece through whom Christ can speak about Himself. "They are not likely to believe," St. Paul says, "unless they hear Christ." If it was true when he wrote, it is abundantly true to-day. There are few indeed to-day who have not heard *about* Christ; but there are multitudes who have never heard Christ.<sup>1</sup>

3. *Preaching Christ crucified.*—St. Paul's subject was "Christ crucified." He would not preach Christ the Conqueror, or Christ the Philosopher (by preaching which he might have won both Jews and Greeks), but Christ the crucified, Christ the humble. There is a distinction between preaching Christ crucified and preaching the Crucifixion of Christ. It is said by some that the Gospel is not preached unless the Crucifixion be named. But the Apostle did not preach that; he preached Christ—Christ the Example—Christ the Life—Christ the Son of Man—Christ the Son of God—Christ risen—Christ the King of Glory. And ever and unfailingly he preached that Christ as a humble Christ crucified through weakness, yet living by the power of God.

¶ "Reason cries, 'if God were good, He could not look upon the sin and misery of man and live; His heart would break.' The Church points to the Crucifixion and says, 'God's heart did

<sup>1</sup> C. Silvester Horne, *Relationships of Life*, 139.

break.' Reason cries, 'Born and reared in sin and pain as we are, how can we keep from sin? It is the Creator who is responsible; it is God who deserves to be punished.' The Church kneels by the cross and whispers, 'God accepts the responsibility and bears the punishment.' Reason cries, 'Who is God? What is God? The name stands for the unknown. It is blasphemy to say we know Him.' The Church kisses the feet of the dying Christ and says, 'We must worship the majesty we see.'"

O that Thy Name may be sounded  
Afar over earth and sea,  
Till the dead awaken and praise Thee,  
And the dumb lips sing to Thee!

Sound forth as a song of triumph  
Wherever man's foot has trod,  
The despised, the derided message,  
The foolishness of God.

Jesus, dishonoured and dying,  
A felon on either side—  
Jesus, the song of the drunkards,  
Jesus the Crucified!

Name of God's tender comfort,  
Name of His glorious power,  
Name that is song and sweetness,  
The strong everlasting tower,

Jesus the Lamb accepted,  
Jesus the Priest on His throne—  
Jesus the King who is coming—  
Jesus Thy Name alone!

### III.

#### THE RECEPTION OF THE MESSAGE.

No two races, no two types of the human mind, could have been more widely different, more directly the opposite of each other, than the Jew and the Greek. The very fact that the Gospel was displeasing to the one might therefore have led us to expect that it would be sure to please the other. And yet Jews and Greeks, who agreed in nothing else, agreed in rejecting Christ.



¶ Widely different as the demands of the Jew and the Greek seemed at first, they were really asking one and the same thing; they were asking for an *unspiritual religion*; a revelation that should not deal with the heart at all in the way of trial or discipline, that would spare them the great trial of being called on to trust and to love, in spite of doubt and difficulty. What they sought for, in one word, was knowledge without belief. The Jew demanded a demonstration of God to his senses; the Greek demanded a demonstration of God to his intellect. The Jew required a revelation that should compel assent; the Greek required one that should give no occasion for doubt. Both demanded a religion without faith, both asked to see, both refused to believe in an invisible God, and, therefore, both rejected a crucified Christ.<sup>1</sup>

1. To the Jews, the death upon the Cross was a stumbling-block, *i.e.* it was something which they could not get over, because it was so utterly contrary and so entirely repugnant to their religious ideas. It was a "stumblingblock"; literally a trap, something that arrests the foot suddenly in walking and causes a fall. Here, in the very forefront of the Gospel, was the stumbling-block, which they could not get over, and which prevented them from making any effort to weigh the evidences and the claims of Christianity.

(1) To the Jew, the Cross meant failure of the most evident and pitiful kind; it meant impotence and weakness; it meant a life of great apparent promise, a career of great and wide-felt influence, ending in the most disastrous, the most humiliating acknowledgment of helplessness.

¶ It was not only incredible, it was disgusting and abominable, this "word of the Cross." That men should dare to speak of One crucified, of One hung upon a tree, of One who had suffered the death of the accursed as the Messiah of Israel, the Saviour of the world, the chosen Servant of Jehovah—their faces reddened with shame or gathered blackness with rage when they heard of it. In the Jewish writings of those ages our Lord is never directly spoken of. His name was to them a thing of nameless horror; He was a thing of darkness so fearful, so shocking, that to speak or write of Him was by tacit consent forbidden. Only in far-fetched figures and suggestions was that object of loathing dimly alluded to as the arch enemy of Israel.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> W. C. Magee.

<sup>2</sup> R. Winterbotham.

(2) There are multitudes of Christians who worship success; and these would reject and repudiate Christ as emphatically as the Jews if it were open to them, if they were really free to be consistent. Christ represents failure, weakness, humiliation; and they admire only what is successful in this world, what is strong in mere physical might, what is glorified by itself.

¶ They tell us that there are men of science who stumble at the Cross. There are young men and middle-aged men, and old men, so we are told, who follow us sympathetically until we come to the proclamation of the sacrifice of Christ as the atonement for sin, and there they stumble. Shall we remove the cross that these people may not stumble? If we do we remove the world's redemption at the same time. Even though it be a stumbling-block to some, we must preach Christ crucified.<sup>1</sup>

2. To the Greek-speaking heathens the doctrine was foolishness. The Greeks had been trained to speculation. Everything in their esteem ought to assume the shape of a theory, or a system, or a well-arranged argument, and ought to invite them with subtlety of discussion. The Apostle reduced them to what was in their eyes foolishness; he reduced them to a fact—Christ crucified.

(1) Men who sought for wisdom had to find it in other quarters than these. Wisdom is of two kinds: theoretical and practical. *Theoretical* wisdom gives an account and an explanation of all things that are: of the state of the world, of the puzzles and trials of human life, of the nature and character of God and of man. *Practical* wisdom, again, teaches men how to live so as to make the best of life, to avoid most evil, and to attain most good. Now the doctrine of the Cross failed in every way (as they thought, and not unreasonably) to commend itself to wisdom. To see a man, who is said to be the best, and the prime favourite of heaven, dying a horrible death amidst general detestation does not explain anything; it only makes things very much more dark, and perplexed, and confused than before. Moreover, to point to a man who ended his days in such a wretched way can be no help in the way of practical guidance. No one but an absolute lunatic could desire such a fate, or regard it with anything but horror. Have we not a human nature? Are we not made of

<sup>1</sup> J. Thomas.

flesh and blood? Do we not rightly shrink from suffering, cold, hunger, pain, and all their kindred ills? Do we not instinctively desire to be warm, to be full, to be at ease, to be wrapped in comfort and in peace? The doctrine of the Cross, which is of its very nature opposed to all this, is not wisdom but foolishness; it does not deserve a hearing from sensible people.

(2) The opposition which the Gospel met with in St. Paul's day was not of that day alone. The Jew and the Greek, the seeker after the sign and the seeker after wisdom, exist always. Still, wherever the Gospel is preached, must the preacher expect to hear from each of these the same demand that St. Paul heard; still must be found, with St. Paul, Christ crucified a stumbling-block to the one and foolishness to the other. For these two—the seeker after the sign and the seeker after wisdom; the man who would rest all religion, all philosophy, all social polity, upon authority alone, and the man who would rest them all upon reason alone—this Jew, with his reverence for power, his love of custom and tradition—which are the power of the past—his tendency to rest always in outward law and form—the power of the present—his distaste for all philosophical speculation, his impatience of novelty, his dread of change—leaning always to the side of despotism in religion—and, on the other hand this Greek, with his subtle and restless intellect, his taste for speculation, his want of reverence for the past, his desire of change, his love of novelty, his leaning towards licence in society and scepticism in religion; what are they—these two—but the representatives of those two opposite types of mind which divide, and always have divided, all mankind?

3. Those who listened to the call of God found in this preaching of the Apostle exactly what both Jew and Gentile were looking for. It was both a sign and a philosophy. The sign, the proof, which comes closest to us all is a change of heart, an emancipated will, a risen self, a new life. The mind humbled and exalted at once before the Cross of Christ, accepting the message of peace and love, found itself acted on by a new power. All things became new; old habits and corruptions fell off from the believers; they began to walk in newness of life. The great proof of moral regeneration was being exhibited in every Christian Church, and was to every one that felt it a philosophy. The

nature of the soul, the character of God, the destiny and hopes of man, were now realized truths. They did not depend on the capacity to follow a well-reasoned system of philosophy, but on the power to lead a new and a holier life.

¶ In the life of David Hill, the Chinese missionary, it is recorded that as time went on Mr. Hill was increasingly impressed by the conviction that something further should be done to reach the *litterati* of the province, the proud Confucian scholars, in their strong antipathy to Christian truth. Frequently meeting these men he could not but be struck by their contemptuous attitude towards the Gospel, their hatred of foreigners, and their prejudice against missionary work. His whole heart went out to them in genuine sympathy.

By offering prizes for essays on subjects taken from the Christian classics—the Scriptures—he got into touch with Hsi, a Confucian scholar, who carried off three out of four of the prizes. A little later he invited Hsi to be his teacher in studying the Chinese classics. Thus Hsi came to live with Mr. Hill, and became acquainted with the New Testament. Gradually, as he read, the life of Jesus seemed to grow more real and full of interest and wonder, and he began to understand that this mighty Saviour was no mere man, as he once imagined, but God, the very God, taking upon Him mortal flesh. Doubts and difficulties were lost sight of. The old, unquenchable desire for better things, for deliverance from sin, self, and the fear of death, for light upon the dim, mysterious future, came back upon him as in earlier years. And yet the burden of his guilt, the torment of an accusing conscience and bondage to the opium-habit he loathed but could not conquer, grew more and more intolerable. At last, the consciousness of his unworthiness became so overwhelming that he could bear it no longer, and placing the book reverently before him, he fell upon his knees on the ground, and so with many tears followed the sacred story. It was beginning then to dawn upon his soul that this wonderful, Divine, yet human sufferer, in all the anguish of His bitter cross and shame, had something personally to do with him, with his sin and sorrow and need. And so, upon his knees, the once proud, self-satisfied Confucianist read on, until he came to "the place called Gethsemane," and the God-man, alone, in that hour of His supreme agony at midnight in the garden. Then the fountains of his long-sealed heart were broken up. The very presence of God overshadowed him. In the silence he seemed to hear the Saviour's cry, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"; and into his heart there came the wonderful realisation, "He loved me, and gave himself

for me." Then, suddenly, as he himself records, the Holy Spirit influenced his soul, and "with tears that flowed and would not cease," he bowed and yielded himself unreservedly to the world's Redeemer, as his Saviour and his God.<sup>1</sup>

4. *Christ the Power of God.*—The power of God is the force from above, manifested in those spiritual wonders which transform the heart of the believer; expiation which restores God to him, the renewal of will which restores him to God. We know now—by experience of many ages—how much more powerful that defeat, humiliation, overthrow, of Christ upon the Cross is than any victory which God could have given Him. It would have been a very small and commonplace exercise of power if God had interfered to set Christ free from the Cross. Had He come in darkness and flame; had He fallen upon the murderers of our Lord with sudden destruction; had He slain them as one man with the breath of His mouth, it had been a very poor display of the Divine power. Anybody could have done *that* (we may say with reverence) if only he possessed the necessary physical power. But to let Christ die, without a sign, without a struggle; to let Him suffer all things; to let Him taste of defeat, disgrace, and death; *that* was an exercise of power which was, indeed, worthy of God.

(1) Christ crucified is the power of God in *self-sacrifice*. There is no power among men so great as that which conquers evil by enduring evil. It takes the rage of its enemy and lets him break his malignity across the enduring meekness of its violated love. Just here it is that evil becomes insupportable to itself. It can argue against everything but suffering patience; this disarms it. Looking in the face of suffering patience it sinks exhausted. All its fire is spent. In this view it is that Christ crucified is the power of God. It is because He shows God in self-sacrifice, because He brings out and makes historical in the world God's passive virtue, which is, in fact, the culminating head of power in His character.

(2) Christ is, in His sacrifice, the mighty power of God for the *salvation* of men. This is the power that has new-created and sent home, as trophies, in all the past ages, its uncounted myriads of believing, new-created, glorified souls. It can do for

<sup>1</sup> *Life of David Hill*, 118, 132.



us all that we want done. It can regenerate our habits, settle our disorders, glorify our baseness, and assimilate us perfectly to God. There never yet was a human being delivered from the power of sin, except by the power of God; and the Divine power never was exerted upon any human being with that view, except through the Cross of Christ, that is, in consequence of what Christ has done and suffered in our room and stead.

¶ Christ can take the man at his worst and the woman at her basest, and out of them make saints that can love God and that God has loved; make saints that can cause the very breath of the world to grow fragrant and the very heart of the world to grow tender.<sup>1</sup>

(3) The power of Christ crucified is *permanent and universal*. Christ addresses Himself to the world; and His influence transcends all external accidents that serve very well for pomps and shows, because He addresses the hearts of men. The power of "Christ crucified" is this, He works personally in every believer, and is present to strengthen every faithful heart. The power which would have gratified the Jews would have been the demonstration of a moment—a sign, a wonder, a triumph; but the power which is to save a world must know no decay; it must exist at this moment in the same fulness in men's hearts as it did of old on the day of Pentecost. The Jew would have degraded and confined the power of the Messiah; the Jew and not St. Paul would have put the stumbling-block in the way of man's salvation; the truth, the simple truth, which was so obnoxious was after all the most complete manifestation of the power of God.

5. *The Wisdom of God*.—While the Cross of Christ, viewed in its bearing upon the condition and character of men, is a most striking manifestation of Divine power, it is no less striking a manifestation of Divine wisdom. Wisdom is shown in the adaptation of means to an end, so as most effectually to accomplish the object intended. The wisdom of God is the light which breaks on the believer's inward eye, when in the Person of Christ he beholds the Divine plan which unites as in a single work of love, creation, incarnation, redemption, the gathering together of all things under one head, the final glorification of the universe.

<sup>1</sup> A. M. Fairbairn.

(1) The Cross of Christ affords us a *knowledge of the Divine character*, which is complete in all its aspects, which shows us at once the just God and the Justifier of the ungodly—a knowledge which, as it stands revealed in His own word, and when it is not perverted by the ungodliness of the human heart, brings before our minds the Divine character, in the manner best fitted to mould or transform us into the full resemblance of the moral perfection of God.

(2) Christ crucified is to the Christian the wisdom of God because the Cross explains (so far as they can be explained in this world) the dark *mysteries of life and death*, and because it is the practical guide to truth and happiness. All the wisdom man needs to take him safely through the perils and perplexities of life is to be learned from the Cross.

¶ St. Buonaventura (wise and strong himself) used to say that all the learning in the world had never taught him so much as the sight of Christ upon the cross.

(3) The Divine wisdom is such that it *comes within the reach of all*. The wisdom of man would be offered to the select few. Not everybody can read Plato and understand him. Very few can read Hegel and understand him. There are great thinkers concerning whom we take it for granted that they are great thinkers, but can only say that the little we understand is good, and that we assume that the rest is quite as good. But God's wisdom comes to all. What if the world were to be saved by the wisdom of man? How many could thus be saved? What if we had to depend for redemption on the utterances of some wise philosopher? Thousands of the poor sons and daughters of men possessing little intellect and less learning would not be able to lay hold of it. But this is a wisdom coming into the hearts of all, and first of all by preference into the hearts of the simple and untutored and childlike.

Away, haunt thou not me.  
Thou vain Philosophy!  
Little hast thou bestead,  
Save to perplex the head,  
And leave the spirit dead.  
Unto thy broken cisterns wherefore go,  
While from the secret treasure-depths below,



Fed by the skiey shower,  
And clouds that sink and rest on hill-tops high,  
Wisdom at once, and Power,  
Are welling, bubbling forth, unseen, incessantly?  
Why labour at the dull mechanic oar,  
When the fresh breeze is blowing,  
And the strong current flowing,  
Right onward to the Eternal Shore?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Clough, *Poems*, 24.

THE SUM OF SAVING KNOWLEDGE.

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## THE SUM OF SAVING KNOWLEDGE.

For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.—1 Cor. ii. 2.

THERE is another way of translating the text. Some have translated it thus: "For I did not determine to know anything among you. . . ." According to Godet, "the Apostle does not say 'I determined (judged good) not to know . . . ' but 'I did not judge good to know . . . ' He intentionally set aside the different elements of human knowledge by which he might have been tempted to prop up the preaching of salvation. He deemed that he ought not to go in quest of such means."

### I.

#### THE APOSTLE'S DETERMINATION.

1. *I determined.* There is no doubt or hesitation in this statement. These are the words of one who had weighed the matter well, and knew whereof he spoke. Here is one who blows the trumpet of truth with no uncertain sound, who speaks with no tremor in his voice; who has a decided conviction of what he knows and believes, and who thinks, and speaks, and acts in accordance with that knowledge and belief. St. Paul has decided for himself what is true; and is determined to declare it and to stand by it.

¶ St. Paul was no hired teacher—not an official expounder of a system. He preached what he believed. He felt that his words were Eternal Truth; and hence came their power. He preached ever as if God Almighty were at his side; hence arises the possibility of discarding elegance of diction and rules of oratory. For it is half-way towards making us believe, when a man believes himself. Faith produces faith. If you want to convince men, and ask how you shall do it, we reply, Believe

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with all your heart and soul, and some souls will be surely kindled by your flame.<sup>1</sup>

2. Not improbably this determination of St. Paul's represents a temptation conquered, a soul-conflict won. To such a one as he, it would be a trial of spirit to contemplate service in such a city as Corinth. Corinth was a centre of fashion. Shall he essay to appeal to the fashionable crowd with "Christ crucified" as the central theme? Will he not repel them thus? May he not emphasize other aspects of Christ which will be attractive and not repellent? Thus the evil one would ply him. But the God of peace crushed Satan under his feet, and his splendid "I determined" rings out. Corinth was an æsthetic city. Its architecture is a proverb still, and its brasses are still famous. Corinth was an intellectual city. Its typical Greek love of philosophy all men know. It was an opulent commercial city too. Shall he not soften the truth and smooth his message? Will not taste, and culture, and materialism, and wealth resent the preaching of "Christ crucified"? It may be, but, "I determined," cries this hero of the Cross. He will cry out and shout in the delicate ears of Corinth nothing but the crucified Lord.

3. What is the ground of this intense and all-absorbing faith? St. Paul believes that he has in his hand something that will explain man to himself, a man's life to himself. He is so firmly convinced of this that, although his mind is large and capacious and he can view with a sympathetic admiration many of the magnificent manifestations of world-power, still, in his own estimate, the sacred message which he has to give to the world is worth all else besides. He is quite alive, as his letter shows, to the variety of powers, the nimbleness of intellect, the ambitious skill which the Corinthians possess; he knows that they are a people eager to express themselves in many ways, that they rejoice in the powers of rhetoric, in the gifts of tongue, in skilful elucidation of philosophical mysteries. But still he comes to these, and he says: "I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." He has made up his mind that this particular formula, "Jesus Christ, and him crucified," expresses

<sup>1</sup> F. W. Robertson.

for the world a great, a central, an extensive truth. This is the knowledge for which St. Paul counts all else but loss—"to know Jesus Christ, and him crucified." This is the simple gospel: its simplicity is its offence in the eyes of many. Nevertheless there are infinite depths in it. It is as when we look into the clear depths of some swift-flowing river. Its very clearness had deceived us. We thought it but a shallow stream, and are astonished at its undreamed-of depths. So with this message of St. Paul, we notice its simplicity first, its apparent narrowness, its exclusiveness; and then we see something of its depth, its boundlessness, its comprehensiveness.

¶ Berry told some of his Bolton friends, at the time, how startled and disappointed he had been at finding himself powerless for a while to give help and comfort to a woman who was dying, amid tragic and squalid surroundings, in one of the lowest parts of the town. He had been called upon to minister to her, but as he unfolded the Christian message, as he was wont to preach it then—the doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood and the Eternal Love—as he told the story of the Prodigal and the Magdalene, her heart gave no response, and she looked up with eyes which seemed to him to ask if that was all he had to say to a lost and dying woman. Under a new afflatus, that came he knew not whence, he began with trembling voice to speak on evangelical simplicities, to tell of Christ's death for a world's sin, and to point her to the Cross for pardon. To his joy and wonder he found that in response to words as simple as those he heard at his mother's knee, the sinful one found rest and peace.<sup>1</sup>

Who speaketh now of peace?

Who seeketh for release?

The Cross is strength, the solemn Cross is gain.

The Cross is Jesus' breast,

Here giveth He the rest

That to His best belov'd doth still remain.

How sweet an ended strife!

How sweet a dawning life!

Here will I lie as one who draws his breath

With ease, and hearken what my Saviour saith

Concerning me; the solemn Cross is gain;

Who willeth now to choose?

Who strives to bind or loose?

Sweet life, sweet death, sweet triumph and sweet pain.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. S. Drummond, *Charles A. Berry*, 35.

<sup>2</sup> Dora Greenwell.

## II.

## THE CONCENTRATION OF HIS MESSAGE.

Every act of self-determination involves a corresponding self-repression. Every selection includes at least one alternative. No man commits himself to a really practical resolution without first putting away and rejecting. Many pursuits invited St. Paul. They were attractive, pleasant, honourable, useful to the world. He had all the instincts of a student. He was a scholar with splendid capacity. He might have been, we feel persuaded, a greater than Philo, than Seneca—a greater than Plato himself. “To know Jesus Christ, and him crucified” is the end for which everything else is sacrificed. By “Jesus Christ,” the Apostle understands His manifestation in general—His life, death, and Messianic dignity. Yet, while confining himself to this elementary theme of preaching, he might still have found means to commend Jesus to the attention and admiration of the wise. But he determined “not to know anything, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” He will not know even Jesus Christ except in one aspect. That is the idea. One of our best exegetes thus renders the words: “And even Him *as having been crucified.*” It is the crucified Christ alone that he will know. Observe the far-reaching word “know.” Not merely does he refuse to speak on any other theme, but he will “know” none other. The crucified Saviour shall fill the whole horizon of his mind and heart. He will, so to say, severely limit his Christology to this phase: “Even Him as having been crucified.”

1. St. Paul disdained systems of *philosophy* or the teaching of *morality* merely. The Gospel has been presented as a philosophy. The development of the Church, the innumerable attacks of scepticism, the rise of problems within Christianity itself have rendered imperative the presentation of the Christian system as a well-ordered scheme of philosophical thought. Profound thinkers have arisen from time to time in the Christian Church who have demonstrated the reasonableness of Christianity as a philosophical system, and the work of these thinkers is of great value. But where one man is converted by reading books of apologetics or theology, a thousand are drawn and held captive



by the pathos of Calvary—the moving, subduing story of the Cross. Men of all orders and degrees, of all climes and tongues, have owned the wondrous contagion of the Cross, and have yielded to its strange compulsion.

¶ We are philosophers who have found the truth, chemists who have discovered (or rather been told of) the elixir of life; as we read again our Plato and Aristotle, and even the modern searchers after truth, we are the children

On whom those truths do rest  
That they are toiling all their lives to find.

To be at the centre of all things; to have disclosed in our undeserving ears the secret of the ages; to know *for certain* how the world came into being; to have in the Cross the long sought after key to the suffering of the world; to be told what all this curious world is tending towards—that is our real position in the realm of thought.<sup>1</sup>

2. *Theology* cannot take the place of the Cross. Nothing has been more fatal in the history of Christianity than that marvellous intellectual curiosity which has been earnest to invent doctrine after doctrine, experience upon experience, till there appears a complete scheme of dogmatic ideas which is called systematic theology. But theological ideas, however systematic, lead only to barrenness and dryness if theologians ignore the fundamental principle which the Apostle has laid down—that the key is not to be found in a theology apart from a person, nor in a person apart from a theology. Whatever the Apostles teach, they always teach Christ. They never turn their teaching into dry intellectual formulæ; they abhor the exaggerated rationalism—for it is nothing more—of the extreme dogmatist, just as they have no sympathy with the incoherent gush which satisfies indolent devotion.

¶ A man may be a great theologian and at the same time a great sinner. If theology could save anybody the devil himself would have been converted long ago. He is one of the most expert theologians alive; he can quote Scripture for his purpose with marvellous propriety; but he is the devil yet for all that. On the other hand, there are many whose theological knowledge

<sup>1</sup> A. F. Winnington Ingram, *Messengers, Watchmen, and Stewards*, 16.

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is hardly worth the name, but whose devout and godly lives are a pattern and an inspiration to all who see them.<sup>1</sup>

3. *Science* cannot take the place of the Cross. Some are constantly asserting the claim of science to supersede Christianity. Many well-meaning Christians are spending the time which might be devoted to evangelistic work in endeavouring to reconcile the book of Genesis with the latest scientific theory, or in attempting, from a very superficial knowledge of the subject, to reply to men who not only possess an enormously larger stock of facts on scientific matters, but who also—and this is far more important—have had the advantage of a scientific training. Let us leave to experts investigation into the condition of the early inhabitants of the world. The most serious question in the world is not, What think ye of Darwin? or even, What think ye of Moses? It is, What think ye of Christ?

O world invisible, we view thee,  
O world intangible, we touch thee,  
O world unknowable, we know thee,  
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee.

Does the fish soar to find the ocean,  
The eagle plunge to find the air—  
That we ask of the stars in motion  
If they have rumour of thee there!

Not where the wheeling systems darken,  
And our benumbed conceiving soars!—  
The drift of pinions, would we hearken,  
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

The angels keep their ancient places;—  
Turn but a stone, and start a wing!  
'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangèd faces,  
That miss the many-splendoured thing.

But (when so sad thou canst not sadder)  
Cry;—and upon thy so sore loss  
Shall shine the traffic of Jacop's ladder  
Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross.

<sup>1</sup> H. W. Horwill.

Yea, in the night, my Soul, my daughter,  
 Cry,—clinging Heaven by the hems,  
 And lo, Christ walking on the water  
 Not of Genesareth, but Thames!<sup>1</sup>

4. St. Paul disdained *human eloquence*. It is certain that St. Paul was not unversed in the wisdom, or unskilled in the rhetoric, which was all the vogue in his day. The Apostle could have presented his message in a beautiful dress, and might have recommended himself to his hearers by polished periods; but he knew very well that the power of the Gospel did not consist in these things.

5. St. Paul was careful to efface *self*. He did not mar his message by any reference to himself. His eye was fixed on Christ. His desire was to exalt Christ. His zeal expended itself in proclaiming Christ the Saviour of sinners. There were no side glances at his own prospects, his own reputation, his own success. He was content to hide behind the person of Christ, so that He might be seen and loved, and honoured and exalted. Like John the Baptist, whose business it was to cry "Behold the Lamb," and to point his hearers away from himself, saying, "He must increase, but I must decrease," so it was St. Paul's business to declare Christ crucified and to keep himself in the background.

¶ In any work which is to live, or be really beautiful, there must be the spirit of the Cross. That which is to be a temple of God must never have the marble polluted with the name of the architect or builder. There can be no real success, except when a man has ceased to think of his own success.<sup>2</sup>

¶ As Michael Angelo wore a lamp on his cap to prevent his own shadow from being thrown upon the picture which he was painting, so the Christian minister and servant needs to have the candle of the Spirit always burning in his heart, lest the reflection of self and self-glorying may fall upon his work to darken and defile it.<sup>3</sup>

### III.

#### THE COMPREHENSIVENESS OF HIS MESSAGE.

When the Apostle tells us that he is determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified, he impresses upon

<sup>1</sup> Francis Thompson.

<sup>2</sup> F. W. Robertson.

<sup>3</sup> A. J. Gordon.

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our minds that this is "the hidden wisdom which God hath ordained before the world." He means that to know Christ crucified is the maximum of knowledge, not the minimum. He means that in Jesus Christ and Him crucified all doctrines culminate, and from Jesus Christ and Him crucified all duties emanate and evolve. We live in a world which may well be illustrated as a labyrinth, and as we pursue our way, there are many deviating paths down which we may be tempted to wander. But for us who desire practical wisdom for the conduct of life, we do not want a map of the whole labyrinth; what we do want is a silver thread which may pass through our hands and guide us to the secret part of all things. That guiding thread St. Paul claims to give us in the knowledge of Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

¶ "You are going down to the assize, my lord?" "Yes." "What do you think you will do with that remarkable series of frauds committed some time ago?" "I do not know." "What do you think you will do with that case of forgery, the most elaborate and intricate piece of business I ever heard of in all our criminal jurisprudence—what do you think you will do with it?" "I do not know." "Why, are you going down to the city in a loose mind?" "No." "What have you resolved to do?" "One thing. I have determined nothing except one thing." "What is that, my lord?" "That the law shall be administered and justice shall be done." That is what St. Paul said.<sup>1</sup>

¶ Mr. Guyse did not condemn, but both approved and practised, the preaching of Christian morals, while he denied that such preaching is all that is meant by the phrase and commission, "to preach Christ." His statements on this department were the following:—

*Preaching Christ* (in a latitude of the expression) takes in the whole compass of Christian religion considered in its reference to Christ. It extends to all its noble improvements of natural light and principles, and to all its glorious peculiarities of the supernatural and incomprehensible kind, as each of these may, one way or other, be referred to Him. In this sense there is no doctrine, institution, precept, or promise—no grace, privilege, or duty toward God and man—no instance of faith, love, repentance, worship, or obedience, suited to the Gospel state and to the design and obligations of the Christian religion—that don't belong to preaching Christ. But to bring all these with any propriety

<sup>1</sup> J. Parker.

under this denomination, they must be considered, according to their respective natures or kinds, in their reference to Christ, that He may be interwoven with them and appear to be concerned in them. They must be preached, not with the air of a heathen moralist or Platonic philosopher, but with the spirit of a minister of Christ, referring them up to Him, as revealed, or enjoined, or purchased by Him—as shining in their brightest lustres and triumphing in all their glories through Him—as built upon Him and animated by Him—as lodged in His hands who is head over all things to the church—as standing in the connections, uses, and designs in which He hath placed them—as known, enjoyed, or practised by light and grace derived from Him—as to be accounted for to Him—as acceptable to God, and advantageous to our salvation, alone through Him, by faith in Him—as enforced upon us by motives and obligations taken from Him—and as tending to His glory and the glory of God in Him.<sup>1</sup>

¶ A company of young men were once met at supper in the old days of Athens, and Socrates, the great teacher of morality, was present. The conversation turned on their guest. “Socrates,” said Alcibiades, “is like the figure of the Wood-god which you see in the workshops of sculptors: if you open it, you shall find it filled with images of all the gods.” That was the highest praise which in those days of heathen worship it was possible to give to a human being. It was as much as to say that all the forms of Divine life imagined and worshipped at that time were to be found in the one life of Socrates. And, far off, it may be taken as an outshading of the reality presented to us in this word of St. Paul concerning Christ.<sup>2</sup>

¶ In Tennyson’s “Palace of Art” we have the story of how a soul tried to satisfy herself with an environment completely beautiful. Art and Literature were drawn upon lavishly to make her a meet dwelling-place. But into this paradise of all beauty despair crept, and made havoc. Fear fell like a blight, and the question of questions came to be

What is it that will take away my sin,  
And save me lest I die?

At last, come to her true self, and awake to her need of God,

“Make me a cottage in a vale,” she said,  
“Where I may mourn and pray.”

Yet Tennyson had too wide a vision of the truth to make an end

<sup>1</sup> John Guyse.

<sup>2</sup> A. Macleod.



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there. He honours the "first needs" in his poem, but he is careful to leave room for all that enriches life. And so he makes his penitent soul ask as a last request,

Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are  
So lightly, beautifully built:  
Perchance I may return with others there  
When I have purged my guilt.<sup>1</sup>

### i. To know Jesus Christ.

It is perfectly possible to know the things that are said about Christ, and not to know Him about whom these things are said. Theological cobwebs have been wrapped round the gracious figure of Christ with disastrous results. He must be *known*—by personal, persistent, private communion; by long, intense contemplation—known as He was known to Loyola, on whose upturned face and uplifted hands the very stigmata of the Cross started out.

1. To know Jesus Christ is *to know man* in ideal development. In Him we behold our human nature fully inspired and possessed by God. He is at once a revelation of God and a manifestation of human perfection. As much of God as could be held in a human mind and heart, and shown in human virtues, was found in Christ Jesus. He is the Son of Man, the only perfect specimen of humanity that has lived upon the earth, the ideal of what we ought to be, and the type of the new creation.

¶ The Cross had become the unchanging centre of my thoughts, but these, as they revolved around it, had gradually, yet surely, formed for themselves an orbit widely diverging from the circle in which Christian consciousness is wont to move. The Cross, as I looked at it more and more intently, became to me the revelation of a loving and a suffering God. I learnt to look upon the sacrifice of the death of Christ, not only as being the all-sufficient satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, *but also as the everlasting witness to God's sympathy with man.* The mystery of the Cross did not, it is true, *explain* any one of the enigmas connected with our mortal existence and destiny, but it linked itself in my spirit with them all. It was itself an enigma flung down by God alongside the sorrowful problem of human life, the confession of Omnipotence itself to some stern reality of misery and wrong.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Arch. Alexander.

<sup>2</sup> Dora Greenwell.

2. To know Christ is *to know God*. Christ reveals God to us. The life of Christ shows us the holiness of God; the patience of Christ shows us the longsuffering of God; the compassion of Christ shows us the mercy of God; the tenderness of Christ shows us the gentleness of God; the sympathy of Christ opens to us the very heart of God: while the death of Christ reveals to us the justice of God.

Here hast thou found me, oh mine enemy!  
 And yet rejoice not thou, by strength shall none prevail.  
 By noon thine arrows fly,  
 None faileth of its mark; thou dost not tire;  
 And yet rejoice not thou! Each shaft of fire  
 That finds me here becomes a living nail.  
 What strength of thine, what skill can now avail  
 To tear me from the Cross? My soul and heart  
 Are fastened here! I feel the cloven dart  
 Pierce keenly through. What hands have power to wring  
 Me hence? What voice can now so sweetly sing  
 To lure my spirit from its rest? Oh now  
 Rejoice my soul, for thou  
 Hast trodden down thy foeman's strength through pain.<sup>1</sup>

#### ii. To know Jesus Christ crucified.

Education, Plato tells us, is the turning away of the soul from the images, shadows, *simulacra* of things, to the facts and verities of real existence. Education is not increase of knowledge, nor is it the quickening and strengthening of one faculty, such as the intellect. Education is the awakening and unfolding of the whole nature, due regard being had to those capacities which belong to the higher range. Nothing contributes more to man's education than the discovery of a great fact, the recognition and contemplation of a great thought. It uplifts, expands, and augments the entire being. Now "Christ crucified" is the greatest, the most transcendent fact in the whole universe. It is the master-thought of the Eternal. To know Christ crucified is to know the meaning of life. The death of Christ is the solving power of the mystery of the universe. It is also to know how to live and how to die. The Cross is the moral lever for the world. It lifts men above the power of sin.

<sup>1</sup> Dora Greenwell.



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¶ In a letter to a friend, Elmslie describes his experience among the children in an Edinburgh east-end Sabbath School: "When I was ending I spoke of how Jesus deserved to be loved, and that they should ask to be made to love Him. One little girlie whispered, 'I will ask Him, for, oh, I do want to love Him!' and when I said it was time to go away they cried, 'Oh, dinna send's away yet, tell's mair about Jesus'; and then they came round me, and made me promise to tell them 'bonnie stories about Jesus' next Sabbath. I have found that nothing interests them more than what is directly about Jesus. I could not help telling you all these little things, but I never had the same sort of *feeling* in teaching a class before, and I would like you to *remember* sometimes my poor little children down in the Canongate. I wish I could take them all into a better atmosphere, for it is sad to think of their chances of ever becoming good in such an evil, wretched place. Harper and I have been having many nice talks. I mean to preach often in the summer—I *want* to."<sup>1</sup>

1. To know Christ crucified is to know the meaning of life.

(1) In the Cross of Christ we come to understand the mystery of *human suffering*. Sorrow and pain pass no man by; and no reasoning can argue them out of existence, or reduce our fight with disease and suffering to a phantom battle. Living in a world where the blows of misfortune are constantly falling; where the ravages of suffering are nowhere long absent; where every joy is every moment exposed to blight; where development yields new pain; where increasing knowledge, increasing refinement, increasing goodness and sympathy mean increasing sorrow, and men and women suffer, not for being worse, but for being better than their fellows, it is no wonder that the Cross appeals to human hearts everywhere as a symbol of human life, and holds us under the spell of a solemn fascination. Rejoice as we may,—and we ought to rejoice—in all that brightens and sweetens life, yet the fellowship of suffering is wider and deeper than the fellowship of happiness. A German poet has said that the image of humanity, broken in all its limbs, transfixed in hands and feet and sorrowful unto death, has become distasteful to men; but that can be true of men only in their light, careless, self-indulgent hours. In all our deeper experiences our feet tread the path that leads to Calvary, and we seek the Man of Sorrows acquainted

<sup>1</sup> W. Robertson Nicoll, *W. G. Elmslie*, 41.

with grief. Christ has not diminished the suffering of the world, but He has given it a new and nobler meaning, made it appear to be no longer God's wrath and curse, but God's love and blessing.

¶ The Cross is the supreme instance of the law that no moral or spiritual victory is won, no glorious thing can be done, without suffering, and here suffering was borne to its farthest verge in death.<sup>1</sup>

(2) In the Cross of Christ we learn the meaning and power of *self-sacrifice*. The Cross, as the revelation and symbol of redemption through sacrifice, needs to be brought back to our common life. So far as the principle is concerned, it is right to apply, and we do instinctively apply, all the New Testament phraseology of redemption to parents sacrificing themselves for the good of their children, to patriots suffering and dying for the sacred causes of justice and freedom, to the vast army of labourers who procure for us our necessities and luxuries at the cost of their nobler growth and comfort. Without shedding of blood—blood of body, blood of brain, blood of heart—there has been no remission of sins, no redemption from evil conditions, no progress from a lower to a higher state of society. Figuratively, if not literally, men have been crucified, their hands torn, their hearts pierced through with many sorrows, in the interest of every onward step and movement of mankind. The work which really helps the world—work of statesman and philanthropist, work of poet and painter and doctor, work of teacher and preacher—is work into which men put their life, their heart's blood. It is this power to give without counting the cost to one's self, this power of suffering and sacrifice, that is the secret of all redeeming work.

¶ There are elements of suffering for sin which are not only possible to the guiltless, but which only they are capable of. Not only can a good man suffer for another's sin, but it is just in proportion to his goodness that he will suffer. The sin of a dearly loved child will give pain to a saintly mother far more keen than the child himself will feel. The child's sin blunts his sensitiveness to holiness and to the evil of sin. The mother's holiness and love will be the measure of her suffering. No suffer-

<sup>1</sup> P. A. Ellis.

ing for sin can be so deep as that which is endured for the bad by the good who love them and do not partake of their guilt.<sup>1</sup>

(3) In the Cross of Christ we realize the meaning of *sin*. Before that, the world treated sin lightly; after that it could not. The world will always treat sin lightly until it understands the meaning of God condemning sin in the flesh where Christ died. Belief in Christ means, and must mean, a sense of the guilt of sin, a hatred of sin, a personal sense of sin and penitence for it. Apart from this there could be no coming to the Saviour, or trust in Him, since there would be no felt necessity for salvation.

¶ The true cross of the Redeemer was the sin and sorrow of this world—that was what lay heavy on His heart—and that is the cross we shall share with Him, that is the cup we must drink of with Him, if we would have any part in that Divine Love which is one with His sorrow.<sup>2</sup>

(4) In the Cross we come to know the *victory of failure*. The Cross is the revelation and symbol of victory, but of victory in failure and because of failure. There never was such an apparent failure as the Crucifixion. But the Cross was not the end but the beginning—the beginning of victory—an endless victory to the cause of goodness in the world. There are successes that are sadder than any failures, and failures that are more glorious than any successes. And the history of all that is best on this earth is one continuous illustration of this law of the Cross. The lives of not a few of the great religious leaders of the last century seemed more or less a failure—Robertson's, Maurice's, Colenso's; but they are having now a second and a better life—the victory which comes of the apparent defeat, and because of it.

He passed in the light of the sun,  
 In the path that the many tread,  
 And his work, like theirs, was done  
 For the sake of his daily bread;  
 But he carried a sword, and, one by one,  
 Out there in the common light of the sun,  
 The sins of his life fell dead.

<sup>1</sup> P. A. Ellis.

<sup>2</sup> Dinah Morris in *Adam Bede*.

His feet never found the way  
 That leads to the porch of fame,  
 But he strove to live each day  
 With a conscience void of blame;  
 And he carried a cross whose shadow lay  
 Over every step of his lowly way,  
 And he treasured its splendid shame.

So life was a long, hard fight—  
 For the wrong was ever there,  
 And the cross ne'er out of sight,  
 The cross of a grey world's care;  
 But right through the day to the failing light  
 He carried the cross and fought the fight,  
 Great-hearted to do and bear.

Night fell—and the sword was sheathed,  
 And the cross of life laid down,  
 And into his ear was breathed  
 A whisper of fair renown;  
 And the nameless victor was glory-wreathed,  
 For the Voice that said, "Let thy sword be sheathed,"  
 Said also, "And take thy crown." <sup>1</sup>

(5) To know Christ crucified is *to know God as a loving Father*. In St. Paul's day this was an idea so new and so wonderful and so wonderfully helpful that it excluded in the Apostle's mind all other knowledge. God was no longer a wrathful potentate, He was no longer the patron of the Jewish nation only, He was the Father of all men, who willed not that any should perish. In the knowledge of Jesus Christ there had burst upon the Apostle's mind the all-transforming thought that God was not law, but love. The death of Christ—this is the great truth of truths in the gospel, the great wonder of wonders, the finishing and perfect proof of that love of God to us, beyond which we can conceive nothing higher. All in the gospel rests upon it; without it the gospel could not be understood. From the Cross of Christ streams all the light which makes the gospel the message of peace and comfort to sinful and dying men.

¶ In one of the ancient churches of Central Italy there is a unique representation of the Crucifixion. Behind the Christ on

<sup>1</sup> Percy C. Ainsworth *Poems and Sonnets*, 17.

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the Cross we catch a dim vision of the Eternal Father ; the hands of the Father behind the hands of the Son, and the nails which pierce the Son piercing the Father also. We shrink from it at first as coarse and rude, but as we think about it we feel that it is the old painter saying, in the only language which he could command, what has been so long and strangely forgotten, if not in form yet in reality, that God is in Christ, that the Father is in the Son, that His love had not to be won by sacrifice, that it is His love which is embodied in the sacrifice, that the Cross and Passion are the revelation in time and space, in visible and historical form, of the grief and pain of a God who suffers for and with His creation and His children.<sup>1</sup>

2. To know Christ crucified is to know how to live and how to die.

(1) St. Paul wanted to find a power that should be adequate to cope with men's dispositions and reach down to the very centre of feeling, and that should take hold of men's wills. And he found that power in Christ. They who long after better things find their ideal in Him ; He lives on by the cords of love, He bids them live righteously and holily in this present world ; and with the command comes the power. There is power in Christ to transform the nature and to renew the life ; and because the Apostle knew this, he made Him the theme of his preaching, and uplifted Him before the longing eyes of Jew and Gentile.

¶ Does God have no heroes but those who lead on a great battlefield ? Has He no saints but those in pictures, with a halo about their head ? Heroism in the common life, that is what the world needs ; men and women who in common places will do everyday duties without noise or glitter, just because the heart and conscience say, " This is the way, walk ye in it."

(2) There is one study, the deepest, hardest of all, which is equally and supremely necessary for every one to make some progress in before the application of it comes. It is the study of how to die. We cannot think how ever it will be possible for us to go through that. One thing we hope. We hope that we may not die reluctant, as if under doom, but with life's onward action and life's hopefulness still present in us ; looking tenderly back, but looking calmly, earnestly, before us. If that is our hope, on what can it rest ? It is assured to us as soon as Christ

<sup>1</sup> J. Hunter.

crucified is assured to us. The saints of all time, in proportion to the measure of their faith and of their self-sacrifice, have found death robbed of its terrors.

Pausing a moment ere the day was done,  
While yet the earth was scintillant with light,  
I backward glanced. From valley, plain, and height,  
At intervals, where my life-path had run,  
Rose cross on cross; and nailed upon each one  
Was my dead self. And yet that gruesome sight  
Lent sudden splendour to the falling night,  
Showing the conquests that my soul had won.

Up to the rising stars I looked and cried,  
"There is no death! for year on year, re-born  
I wake to larger life: to joy more great,  
So many times have I been crucified,  
So often seen the resurrection morn,  
I go triumphant, though new Calvaries wait."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ella Wheeler Wilcox, *Poems of Experience*, 31.





THINGS PREPARED FOR LOVE.

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## THINGS PREPARED FOR LOVE.

But as it is written,

Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not,  
And which entered not into the heart of man,  
Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him.

1 Cor. ii. 9.

NOWHERE in the Old Testament are these words literally found. But the source of the quotation is undoubtedly the passage, Isa. lxiv. 4 combined with lxv. 17: "Men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen a God beside thee, which worketh for him that waiteth for him . . ."; and, "The former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." Similar combinations of several prophetic quotations are not rare in St. Paul's writings.

The context of the verse is the assertion of the Apostle that there is about the Gospel a hidden wisdom, an inner truth; and that this truth was invisible to the minds of those who rejected and crucified the Saviour; for, had they seen it, they would not have crucified Him. And then comes in the text, to prove that such blindness of the soul was recognized long before in the Old Testament Scriptures as a mystery and a fact. The blindness of those who slew the Lord did but answer to what "was written"—that solemn formula of final appeal with the Apostles and their Master. Isaiah had spoken of the acts of God in redeeming mercy as things beyond the reach of *a priori* discovery by human senses, and reason, and imagination. Man could receive them when revealed; there was that in man which could respond to them when revealed; but for that revelation there was needed the action of the Divine Spirit on the spirit of man. No record of facts, no witness of phenomena, without the special action of the Holy Spirit, could bring them home to the heart. But to

Christian believers, to St. Paul and his disciples, they were brought home. And it was so, not because their eyes or ears were keener than those of the Lord's executioners, or because their hearts were more imaginative or more sympathetic, but because the Holy Ghost had unveiled to them this wisdom, this esoteric wisdom and glory of the ways of God.

The Apostle's quotation of the Prophet plainly refers to the whole gift of salvation, not only to the bright eternal future of the saved. The words cannot indeed exclude the thought of the glories of heaven, which assuredly senses have not seen, nor imagination conceived, but which God has prepared for them that love Him. But neither can they exclude the wonders of grace on earth; which equally are things of eternal plan and preparation.

## I.

### THE THINGS OF GOD ARE NOT REVEALED TO THE NATURAL MAN.

"Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man."

1. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." The preaching of the Apostle Paul was rejected by numbers in the cultivated town of Corinth. It was not wise enough or eloquent enough, nor was it sustained by miracles. The man of taste found it barbarous; the Jew missed the signs and wonders which he looked for in a new dispensation; and the rhetorician missed the convincing arguments of the Schools. To all this the Apostle was content to reply that his judges were incompetent to try the question. The princes of this world might judge in a matter of politics; the leaders in the world of literature were qualified to pronounce on a point of taste; the counsellors of this world to weigh an amount of evidence. But in matters spiritual they were as unfit to judge as a man without ear is to decide respecting harmony; or a man, judging alone by sensation, is fit to supersede the higher truth of science by an appeal to his own estimate of appearances. The world, to sense, seems stationary. To the eye of reason it moves with lightning speed, and the cultivation of reason alone can qualify for an opinion on the matter. The judgment of the senses is worth nothing in

such matters. For every kind of truth a special capacity or preparation is indispensable.

2. By the natural man is meant the ordinary faculties of man; and it is said of these that they cannot discover spiritual truth. By combining the three terms *seeing*, *hearing*, and *entering into the heart*, the Apostle wishes to designate the three names of natural knowledge: sight, or immediate experience; hearing, or knowledge by way of tradition; finally, the inspirations of the heart, the discoveries of the understanding proper. By none of these means can man reach the conception of the blessings which God has destined for him.

### i. The Eye.

“Eye saw not.”

1. Eternal truth is not perceived through the eye; it is not demonstrable to the senses.

(1) God's works in *nature* give us wonderful pleasure. Let us not depreciate what God has given. There is a rapture in gazing on this wonderful world. There is a joy in contemplating the manifold forms in which the All Beautiful has concealed His essence—the Living Garment in which the Invisible has robed His mysterious loveliness. In every aspect of Nature there is joy; whether it be the purity of virgin morning, or the sombre grey of a day of clouds, or the solemn pomp and majesty of night; whether it be the chaste lines of the crystal, or the waving outline of distant hills, tremulously visible through dim vapours; the minute petals of the fringed daisy, or the overhanging form of mysterious forests. It is a pure delight to *see*. But all this is bounded. The eye can reach only the finite Beautiful. And the fairest beauty is perishable.

(2) *Art* has many devotees. The highest pleasure of sensation comes through the eye. He whose eye is so refined by discipline that he can repose with pleasure upon the serene outline of beautiful form has reached the purest of the sensational raptures. The Corinthians could appreciate this. Theirs was the land of beauty. They read the Apostle's letter, surrounded by the purest conceptions of Art. In the orders of architecture, the most richly graceful of all columnar forms receives its name

from Corinth. And yet it was to these men, living in the very midst of the chastely beautiful, upon whom the Apostle emphatically urged—"Eye hath not seen the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

(3) *Science* cannot give a revelation. Science proceeds upon observation. It submits everything to the experience of the senses. Its law, expounded by its great lawgiver, is that if we would ascertain its truth we must see, feel, taste. Experiment is the test of truth. Men have supposed they discovered the law of Duty written on the anatomical phenomena of disease. They have exhibited the brain inflamed by intoxication, and the structure obliterated by excess. They have shown in the disordered frame the inevitable penalty of transgression. But if a man, startled by all this, gives up his sin, has he from this selfish prudence learned the law of Duty? The penalties of wrong-doing, doubtless; but not the sanction of Right and Wrong written on the conscience, of which penalties are only the enforcements. He has indisputable evidence that it is expedient not to commit excesses: but you cannot manufacture a conscience out of expediency: the voice of conscience says not, "It is better not to do so," but "Thou shalt not."

2. "Eye saw not." When He came into this world, who was the Truth and the Life, in the body which God had prepared for Him, He came not in the glory of form: He was a root out of a dry ground: He had no form nor comeliness; when they saw Him, there was no beauty that they should desire Him. The eye did not behold, even in Christ, the things which God had prepared. This is an eternal truth. There is a kingdom which is appreciable by the senses, and another whose facts and truths are seen and heard only by the spirit.

¶ It was rumoured that underneath a certain piece of ground there was iron to be found, and two men were appointed to go and inspect the land and see whether there was really iron there. One man, a scientist and mineralogist, was very conscious of his own limitations; and, knowing his own weakness, he took with him some scientific instruments. The other man, who was buoyant and self-confident, said, "I believe what I can see, and what I can't see I won't believe"; and so he walked over the field, and got over it in no time. He said, "Iron? nonsense! I see no



iron; there is no iron here." This man went to the syndicate and said, "There is no iron there: I walked all over the field and I could not see a trace of it." The other man did not trust to his eye at all. He carried in his hand a little crystal box, and in that little crystal box there was a needle, and he kept watching that needle. He paused, for the needle in that crystal box had pointed down like the very finger of God, and he said, "There is iron there." He passed on, until again that needle pointed down, and he said, "There is iron there," and when he handed in his report he said, "From one end of the field to the other there is iron." "Oh!" said one of the adherents of the first man, "how do you know, when you did not see it?" "Because," he said, "that which cannot be seen with the eye can be magnetically discerned."<sup>1</sup>

## ii. The Ear.

"Ear heard not."

Eternal truth is not reached by the sense of hearing; nor does traditional knowledge reveal it.

1. The many beautiful and varied sounds of nature speak to us of God, if God's existence be already thrilling our hearts, but of themselves they do not reveal the things of God. How many sounds there are that gladden us! Think of the cooling sound of a rippling stream, or a waterfall, or a playing fountain on a hot summer evening. Think of the many pleasing notes and songs of birds. Think of the human voice. There is no sound that we would miss more than that. Then think of music, with all its varied modes of appealing to our feelings. Think of the music of the great masters, how it attracts and fascinates and subdues us, how it inspires and strengthens us, how it makes us glad! But "things which ear heard not," and which ear can never hear, are prepared by God for those that love Him.

2. No revelation can be adequately given by man to man, whether in writing or orally, even if he be put in possession of the Truth itself. For all such revelation must be made through words: and words are but counters—the coins of intellectual exchange. There is as little resemblance between the silver coin and the bread it purchases as between the word and the thing it

<sup>1</sup>A. G. Brown.

stands for. Looking at the coin, the form of the loaf does not suggest itself. Listening to the word, you do not perceive the idea for which it stands, unless you are already in possession of it. Speak of ice to an inhabitant of the torrid zone, the word does not give him an idea, or if it does, it must be a false one. Talk of blueness to one who cannot distinguish colours, what can your most eloquent description present to him resembling the truth of your sensation? Similarly in matters spiritual, no verbal revelation can give a single simple idea. Talk of God to a thousand ears, each has its own conception. The sensual man hears of God, and understands one thing; the pure man hears, and conceives another thing. So that apostles themselves, and prophets, speaking to the ear, cannot reveal truth to the soul—no, not if God Himself were to touch their lips with fire. A verbal revelation is only a revelation to the ear.

3. Traditional knowledge will not reveal eternal truth. There are men who believe on authority. They have heard with the hearing of the ear that God is Love, they have heard that the ways of holiness are the ways of pleasantness and all her paths peace. But a hearsay belief saves not. The Corinthian philosophers heard St. Paul; the Pharisees heard Christ. How much did the ear convey? To thousands exactly nothing. He alone believes truth who feels it. He alone has a religion whose soul knows by experience that to serve God and know Him is the richest treasure.

I have a little kinsman  
Whose earthly summers are but three,  
And yet a voyager is he  
Greater than Drake or Frobisher,  
Than all their peers together!  
He is a brave discoverer,  
And, far beyond the tether  
Of them who seek the frozen pole,  
Has sailed where the noiseless surges roll.  
Ay, he has travelled whither  
A winged pilot steered his bark  
Through the portals of the dark,  
Past hoary Mimir's well and tree,  
Across the unknown sea.

Suddenly, in his fair young hour,  
Came one who bore a flower,  
And laid it in his dimpled hand

With this command:

"Henceforth thou art a rover!  
Thou must make a voyage far,  
Sail beneath the evening star,  
And a wondrous land discover."

With his sweet smile innocent  
Our little kinsman went.

Since that time no word  
From the absent has been heard.

Who can tell

How he fares, or answer well  
What the little one has found  
Since he left us, outward bound?  
Would that he might return!  
Then should we learn  
From the pricking of his chart  
How the skyey roadways part.  
Hush! does not the baby this way bring,  
To lay beside this severed curl,  
Some starry offering  
Of chrysolite or pearl?

Ah, no! not so!

We may follow on his track,  
But he comes not back.

And yet I dare aver

He is a brave discoverer  
Of climes his elders do not know.  
He has more learning than appears  
On the scroll of twice three thousand years,  
More than in the groves is taught,  
Or from furthest Indies brought;  
He knows, perchance, how spirits fare—  
What shapes the angels wear,  
What is their guise and speech  
In those lands beyond our reach—  
And his eyes behold  
Things that shall never, never be to mortal hearers  
told.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Edmund Clarence Stedman.

## iii. The Heart.

“ Which entered not into the heart of man.”

Eternal truth is not discoverable by the heart of man, with all its powers of imagination and all its powers of affection.

1. *Great thoughts originate from a large heart.*—It is a grand thing when, in the stillness of the soul, thought bursts into flame, and the intuitive vision comes like an inspiration; when breathing thoughts clothe themselves in burning words, winged as it were with lightning; or when a great law of the universe reveals itself to the mind of Genius, and where all was darkness, his single word bids Light be, and all is Order where chaos and confusion were before; or when the truths of human nature shape themselves forth in the creative fancies of one like the myriad-minded Poet, and you recognize the rare power of *heart* which sympathizes with and can reproduce all that is found in man. But all this is nothing more than what the material man can achieve. The most ethereal creations of fantastic fancy were shaped by a mind that could read the life of Christ, and then blaspheme the Adorable. The highest astronomer of this age, before whose clear eye Creation lay revealed in all its perfect order, was one whose spirit refused to recognize the Cause of Causes. The mighty heart of Genius had failed to reach the things which God imparts to a humble spirit.

2. *The heart has the power of affection.*—To love is the purest, the serenest ecstasy of the merely human—more blessed than any sight that can be presented to the eye, or any sound that can be given to the ear; more sublime than the sublimest dream ever conceived by genius in its most gifted hour, when the freest way was given to the shaping spirit of imagination. This has entered into the heart of man, yet this is of the lower still. It attains not to the things prepared by God; it dimly shadows them. Human love is but the faint type of that surpassing blessedness which belongs to those who love God.

¶ There are unexhausted possibilities in our lives, and our human hearts are conscious of unrest. Have you never stood in the presence of a commanding and lovely landscape and had the thought come to you that you could conceive a landscape of infinitely greater loveliness than that which unrolled before your eyes? Have you never, if you are a lover of music, been in the

midst of great music and had the thought visit you that you could conceive of harmonies greater and more majestic than the ear of man ever heard? Have you not, although surrounded by many of the joys of life, had thrilling moments visit you, when it seemed to you that you could realize a happiness that was infinite and perfect in its fulness? And so, on the other hand, have not the possibilities of suffering sometimes shot across your consciousness with almost awful force? As the traveller climbing the mountain sometimes comes upon the deep and dark crevice opening at his very foot, so has there not sometimes come to you in the mysterious journey of life a realization of the potential ability of your nature to suffer miserably? It is the sense of unexhausted possibility, the yearning of the heart towards something beyond itself, towards the things which "eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man."<sup>1</sup>

I know 'tis but a loom of *land*,  
 Yet is it land, and so I will rejoice,  
 I know I cannot hear His voice  
 Upon the shore, nor see Him stand;  
     Yet is it land, ho! land.

The land! the land! the lovely land!  
 "Far off" dost say? *Far off*—Ah, blessed home!  
 Farewell! Farewell! thou salt sea-foam!  
 Ah, keel upon the silver sand—  
     Land ho! land.

You cannot see the land, my land,  
 You cannot see, and yet the land is there—  
 My land, my land, through murky air—  
 I did not say 'twas close at hand—  
     But—land ho! land.

Dost hear the bells of my sweet land,  
 Dost hear the kine, dost hear the merry birds?  
 No voice, 'tis true, no spoken words,  
 No tongue that thou may'st understand—  
     Yet is it land, ho! land.

It's clad in purple mists, my land,  
 In regal robe it is apparellèd,  
 A crown is set upon its head,  
 And on its breast a golden band—  
     Land ho! land.

<sup>1</sup> C. Cuthbert Hall.

Dost wonder that I long for land?  
 My land is not a land as others are—  
 Upon its crest there beams a star,  
 And lilies grow upon the strand—  
 Land ho! land.

Give me the helm! there is the land!  
 Ha! lusty mariners, she takes the breeze!  
 And what my spirit sees it sees—  
 Leap, bark, as leaps the thunder-brand,  
 Land ho! land.<sup>1</sup>

## II.

### THE THINGS OF GOD ARE REVEALED BY HIS SPIRIT.

“Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him.”

1. Only the spiritual man can apprehend spiritual truth; and only the spiritual man can comprehend spiritual experience.

(1) *Only the spiritual man can apprehend spiritual truth.*—Just as a blind man cannot possibly form any conception of colour, or a deaf man of music; so the artist, merely as an artist, has no sort of title or qualification to pronounce on questions of scientific research, and in like manner the scientist, as such, is no more competent to discuss matters of religion than the humblest clodman of the land. The man of science, therefore, who loudly vaunts that in all his scientific researches he can find no trace of God, is merely proclaiming to the world his own unreasonableness; for not as a man of science, restricting himself to one set of faculties, but only as a man, giving play and scope to all his faculties, can he learn the things which are hidden from the wise and understanding, and revealed unto babes (Matt. xi. 25). Still more unreasonable are the thoughtless and careless, who find no God in all their gaiety of life, and then say there is none; for from all such God hides Himself, and His glory is absolutely indiscernible by the wanton eye of worldly pleasure. What, then, is the great law of knowledge of Divine things? “If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know.” Obedience to spiritual laws, conformity to spiritual conditions, is essential to real

<sup>1</sup> T. E. Brown.



knowledge of God, and to true insight into the Divine meaning of the facts and forecasts of human life. Spiritual blessings cannot be attained, cannot even be apprehended, save by the humility of faith.

¶ I remember once being present at the Geological Society, when a bottle was produced which was said to contain certain Zoöphytes (delicate water-animals, having the form of plants). It was handed round in the first instance among the initiated on the foremost benches, who commented freely with one another on the forms of the animals in the fluid; but when it came to our hands, we could discover nothing in the bottle but the most limpid fluid, without any trace, so far as our eyes could make out, of animals dead or alive, the whole appearing absolutely transparent. The surprise of the ignorant, at seeing nothing, was only equal to that of the learned, who saw so much to admire. Nor was it till we were specifically instructed what it was we were to look for, and the shape, size, and general aspect of the Zoöphytes pointed out, that our understanding began to co-operate with our sight in peopling the fluid which, up to that moment, had seemed perfectly uninhabited. The wonder then was how we could possibly have omitted seeing objects now so palpable.<sup>1</sup>

(2) *Only the spiritual man can comprehend spiritual experience.*—People say to us: "Your joys are imaginary, your perceptions of God are self-delusions, your assurances, and hopes, and peace of mind, and consciousness of forgiveness, are your own creations: they are things which *we do not feel*, and do not understand, and do not believe." It would be a wonderful thing if they did understand what they have never felt. There are simple things in everyday life that are closely akin to this. There are natures to whom sunsets and flowers and the infinitely varied landscapes of nature are utterly unattractive and meaningless.

Once in a dream I saw the flowers  
 That bud and bloom in Paradise;  
 More fair they are than waking eyes  
 Have seen in all this world of ours.  
 And faint the perfume-bearing rose,  
 And faint the lily on its stem,  
 And faint the perfect violet,  
 Compared with them.

<sup>1</sup> Captain Basil Hall.



## THINGS PREPARED FOR LOVE

I heard the songs of Paradise:  
Each bird sat singing in his place;  
A tender song so full of grace  
It soared like incense to the skies.  
Each bird sat singing to his mate  
Soft cooing notes among the trees:  
The nightingale herself were cold  
To such as these.

I saw the fourfold River flow,  
And deep it was, with golden sand;  
It flowed between a mossy land  
With murmured music grave and low.  
It hath refreshment for all thirst,  
For fainting spirits strength and rest;  
Earth holds not such a draught as this  
From east to west.

The Tree of Life stood budding there,  
Abundant with its twelvefold fruits;  
Eternal sap sustains its roots,  
Its shadowing branches fill the air.  
Its leaves are healing for the world,  
Its fruit the hungry world can feed,  
Sweeter than honey to the taste  
And balm indeed.

I saw the Gate called Beautiful;  
And looked, but scarce could look within;  
I saw the golden streets begin,  
And outskirts of the glassy pool.  
Oh harps, oh crowns of plenteous stars,  
Oh green palm branches many-leaved—  
Eye hath not seen, nor ear hath heard,  
Nor heart conceived.

I hope to see these things again,  
But not as once in dreams by night;  
To see them with my very sight,  
And touch and handle and attain:  
To have all heaven beneath my feet  
For narrow way that once they trod;  
To have my part with all the saints,  
And with my God.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Christina G. Rossetti, *Paradise*.

2. What are *the things* which God has revealed?

"Things" is a short way of saying "thinkings." Everything was first a thought. This world before it became a thing was a thought in the Creator's mind. Every cathedral that has ever been built was a thought in the mind of the architect before it became a thing in the hands of the builder. Every book of poems was first of all a thought in the poet's mind. The things here spoken of are God's thinkings, God's thoughts; but God's thoughts are realities; they are no mere myths, they are things. What are these "deep things of God" to which the Apostle refers? There can be no doubt that St. Paul was thinking of the glorious total of redeeming mercy and the wonders of redeeming grace.

(1) *The knowledge of Christ as God* was to St. Paul one of the most wonderful revelations of the Spirit. He had known Christ after the flesh; he was aware that He had said and done certain things, and had been crucified; and the crucifixion he had regarded as a triumphant refutation of His claims, and as covering Him with well-merited contempt. But as soon as he was changed, the veil was taken from his eyes; and what eye, and ear, and intellect had sought in vain, God revealed by His Spirit.

If Christ, as thou affirmest, be of men  
 Mere man, the first and best but nothing more,—  
 Account Him, for reward of what He was,  
 Now and forever, wretchedest of all.  
 For see; Himself conceived of life as love,  
 Conceived of love as what must enter in,  
 Fill up, make one with His each soul He loved:  
 Thus much for man's joy, all men's joy for Him.  
 Well, He is gone, thou sayest, to fit reward.  
 But by this time are many souls set free,  
 And very many still retained alive;  
 Nay, should His coming be delayed awhile,  
 Say, ten years longer (twelve years, some compute),  
 See if, for every finger of thy hands,  
 There be not found, that day the world shall end,  
 Hundreds of souls, each holding by Christ's word  
 That He will grow incorporate with all,  
 With me as Pamphylax, with him as John,  
 Groom for each bride! Can a mere man do this?

Yet Christ saith, this He lived and died to do.  
 Call Christ, then, the illimitable God,  
 Or lost!<sup>1</sup>

(2) *The revelation of God as Love* comes also by the Spirit. It is in vain that you reiterate that "God is love," if my terrified conscience and cruel temper shut out the very notion of love, and empty the word of all true meaning. The spirit of love must dawn upon our consciousness; no mere description will enable us to understand it; but as soon as its light arises within, a revelation is made, and the spiritual mind apprehends what was hidden from intellect and sense.

O Thou—as represented here to me  
 In such conception as my soul allows,—  
 Under Thy measureless, my atom width!—  
 Man's mind, what is it but a convex glass  
 Wherein are gathered all the scattered points  
 Picked out of the immensity of sky,  
 To re-unite there, be our heaven for earth,  
 Our known unknown, our God revealed to man?  
 Existent somewhere, somehow, as a whole;  
 Here, as a whole proportioned to our sense,—  
 There, (which is nowhere, speech must babble thus!)  
 In the absolute immensity, the whole  
 Appreciable solely by Thyself,—  
 Here, by the little mind of man, reduced  
 To littleness that suits his faculty,  
 In the degree appreciable too;  
 Between Thee and ourselves—nay even, again,  
 Below us, to the extreme of the minute,  
 Appreciable by how many and what diverse  
 Modes of the life Thou madest be! (why live  
 Except for love,—how love unless they know?  
 Each of them, only filling to the edge,  
 Insect or angel, his just length and breadth,  
 Due facet of reflection,—full, no less,  
 Angel or insect, as Thou framest things.<sup>2</sup>

(3) With the revelation of God as Love comes an understanding of the *Divine plan of Salvation*, a comprehension of the meaning of the Cross of Christ. And with the sense of sin that

<sup>1</sup> Browning, *A Death in the Desert*.

<sup>2</sup> Browning, *The Ring and the Book*.

this inevitably brings come also the promise of the forgiveness of sin, and the still more blessed promise of the conquest of sin. This boon—the suppression and extinction of sin—is one of the great gifts which God has prepared for them that love Him.

Sin! wilt thou vanquish me!  
 And shall I yield the victory?  
 Shall all my joys be spoiled,  
 And pleasures soiled,  
 By thee!  
 Shall I remain  
 As one that's slain  
 And never more lift up the head?  
 Is not my Saviour dead!  
 His Blood, thy bane; my balsam, bliss, joy, wine,  
 Shall thee destroy; heal, feed, make me Divine.<sup>1</sup>

(4) *Union with Christ* is one of the deep things of God, and in that union are endless spiritual blessings. To conquer the world by loving it, to be blest by ceasing from the pursuit of happiness, and sacrificing life instead of finding it, to make a hard lot easy by submitting to it—this was St. Paul's Divine philosophy of life. And the princes of this world, amidst scoffs and laughter, replied, Is that all? Nothing to dazzle—nothing to captivate? But the disciples of the inward life, the humble of heart, and the loving, felt that in this lay the mystery of life, of themselves, and of God, all revealed and plain.

"Eye hath not seen":—yet man hath known and weighed  
 A hundred thousand marvels that have been:  
 What is it which (the Word of Truth hath said)  
 Eye hath not seen?

"Ear hath not heard":—yet harpings of delight,  
 Trumpets of triumph, songs and spoken word,  
 Man knows them all: what lovelier, loftier might  
 Hath ear not heard?

"Nor heart conceived":—yet man hath now desired  
 Beyond all reach, beyond his hope believed,  
 Loved beyond death: what fire shall yet be fired  
 No heart conceived?

<sup>1</sup> Traherne.

"Deep calls to deep":—man's depth would be despair,  
 But for God's deeper depth: we sow to reap,  
 Have patience, wait, betake ourselves to prayer:  
 Deep answereth deep.<sup>1</sup>

3. These things God *has prepared*. The term used recalls the words of Christ: "The kingdom *prepared* for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. xxv. 34).

God prepared the things that He knew man's heart would long for. A thing prepared is a thing ready at the moment it is needed and expected. So, when we feel the yoke of sin heavy, then is the moment to accept the prepared deliverance. It was prepared on the Cross, it is found at the Cross. As deliverance from sin is found at the Cross, so also was union with Christ and likeness to Christ prepared at the open grave of Christ, and found by faith in a risen, living Saviour. The hope of our calling, the riches of the glory of our inheritance, the exceeding greatness of His power, these are not future blessings, they are prepared here and now for those who believe and love. And what of the things on before? Truly the glory of *them* is past man's understanding—the city prepared, the place prepared, the rest, the work, the joy, the crown that God is making ready.

There is a Stream, which issues forth  
 From God's eternal Throne,  
 And from the Lamb,—a living stream  
 Clear as the crystal stone.

The stream doth water Paradise;  
 It makes the Angels sing;  
 One cordial drop revives my heart;  
 Hence all my joys do spring.

Eye hath not seen, nor ear hath heard,  
 From fancy 'tis conceal'd,  
 What Thou, Lord, hast laid up for Thine,  
 And hast to me reveal'd.<sup>2</sup>

4. The things are prepared by God *for them that love Him*.

Everything is seen by its own glass; everything looks foolish when seen through any other glass. Music is meaningless when addressed only to the eye; painting has no message to the ear,

<sup>1</sup> Christina G. Rossetti.

<sup>2</sup> John Mason,

The deep things of man can be seen only by their own faculty. So is it with the deep things of God. There are things in religion which are mysteries to every organ but one—the spirit of love. There are depths which love alone can fathom.

The good things are for those who love. Repentant sinners they may be, like David, yet because they are forgiven much they will love much. Love is the condition without which revelation does not take place. No selected child of grace can remain unloving and cold, and yet see and hear and feel the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.

For the heart only dwells, truly dwells, with its treasure,  
And the languor of love captive hearts can unfetter;  
And they who love God cannot love Him by measure,  
For their love is but hunger to love Him still better.

For the lack of desire is the ill of all ills,  
Many thousands through it the dark pathway have trod;  
The balsam, the wine of predestinate wills,  
Is a jubilant pining and longing for God.

Oh, then, wish more for God, burn more with desire,  
Covet more the dear sight of His marvellous face!

(1) *To love God is to love His character.*—God is Love: and to love men till private attachments have expanded into a philanthropy which embraces all, at last even the evil and enemies, with compassion—that is to love God. God is Purity: and to be pure in thought and look; to turn away from unhallowed books and conversation, to abhor the moments in which we have not been pure, is to love God. God is Truth: to be true, to hate every form of falsehood, to live a brave, true, real life—that is to love God. God is Infinite: and to love the boundless, reaching on from grace to grace, adding charity to faith, and rising upwards ever to see the Ideal still above us, and to die with it unattained, aiming insatiably to be perfect even as the Father is perfect—that is love to God.

(2) *Love is manifested in obedience.*—Love is the life of which obedience is the form. “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.” Nothing can be love to God which does not shape itself into obedience. We remember the anecdote of the Roman commander who forbade an engage-



ment with the enemy. The first transgressor against his prohibition was his own son, who accepted the challenge of the leader of the other host, met, slew, spoiled him, and then in triumphant feeling carried the spoils to his father's tent. But the Roman father refused to recognize the instinct which prompted this as deserving of the name of love. Disobedience contradicted it, and deserved death. So with God: strong feelings, warm expressions, varied internal experience co-existing with disobedience, God counts not as Love. Mere weak feeling may not usurp that sacred name.

¶ About this time I had constantly in my mind that wonderful reconciliation of half the theological enigmas which ever have arisen, which Maurice points out in one of his sermons on the Temptation, and expounds more fully (tho', I think, not so forcibly) in one of his latter Prayer-book series on the Consecration Prayer. He reminds us how "worldly men in their carnal and proud hearts cannot conceive how the Father commands because the Son obeys, and the Son obeys because the Father commands." This had for some time given to me a most blessed and practical solution of the question of Free Will. I dared not apply the term "servile" to this loving and willing yet eternal obedience of the Son "begotten before all worlds"; yet surely it was the fullest, completest obedience, the perfect type of all imperfect obedience on earth, and likewise was the authority of the Father the fullest, completest authority, the perfect type of all imperfect authority on earth. This fundamental doctrine of the filial subordination of the Son from all eternity (in no wise interfering with His co-eternity and co-equality with the Father) is hard to receive, and will always be rejected when the understanding seeks to exert an universal empire; yet I fully believe that it is the keystone of theology and humanity.<sup>1</sup>

¶ While abhorring war, M. Coillard always had the strongest sympathy with the military profession. His mind seemed to move in its imagery. Christianity, as he conceived it, was the march of an ever-victorious army; to him it meant a loyalty, not a philosophy, still less a ceremonial system. He had no other ambition than to be "a good soldier of Jesus Christ." "A French general," he once wrote, "told his *aide-de-camp* that the politeness of a soldier was *obedience*; and I myself hold that in all circumstances our duty to our Master is *fidelity*."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Life and Letters of Fenton J. A. Hort*, i. 135.

<sup>2</sup> C. W. Mackintosh, *Coillard of the Zambesi*, 106.



Lord of the host of deep desires  
That spare no sting, yet are to me  
Sole echo of the silver choirs  
Whose dwelling is eternity—

With all save thee my soul is pressed  
In high dispute from day to day,  
But, Love, at thy most high behest  
I make no answer, and obey.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John Drinkwater, *Poems of Men and Hours*, 21.



GOD'S FELLOW-WORKERS.

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## GOD'S FELLOW-WORKERS.

We are God's fellow-workers.—1 Cor. iii. 9.

1. THE characteristic Greek tendency to factions was threatening to rend the Corinthian Church, and each faction was swearing by a favourite teacher. St. Paul uses the words of the text to emphasize the truth that in the process of teaching and saving men God's work links itself with man's, and God's work is so much mightier and more wonderful than man's that it is idle to weigh the work of one human labourer against that of another, after the fashion of these Corinthian sectaries. We might just as well pick out tiny shells in the cement binding the stones of a minster and divide ourselves into factions to champion the architectural honour due to the several tenants of each particular primeval shell, or select striking portions of oak carving and divide ourselves into factions to champion the artistic possibilities of the several acorns that evolved such magnificent material. A rational being has not time to think of these infinitesimal questions. He wishes to save up his tribute of honour for the genius who planned arch and spire, and dreamt out flowered screen and stall, and guided the whole to its many-sided perfection. God's true labourers will be rewarded, not by the reckless praise and short-sighted judgments of men, but by Him who counts them allies, and in the strength of whose gift all right work must be done.

2. Startled by the boldness of the expression of the text, as if it verged on profanity, interpreters have been found to give it a different meaning—"fellow-labourers under God," "fellow-workers in God's field." But this is not justified by the language used. The meaning of St. Paul's words is "We are at work with

God Himself." And to the bold idea of joint labour with God there is added the idea of dependence. "We are God's day-labourers, working *with* Him." It is His to pay the workmen, and to value their labour. For is it not *His* Church, *His* field, *His* house? It is to a Divine possession that the workers put their hand. What gravity attaches to such labour! To cultivate a field the harvest of which is *God's*! To build the house which *God* Himself is to inhabit! God alone can estimate such labour, and He will not fail to do so. These are the ideas in the Apostle's mind when he says: "We are God's fellow-workers."

3. The principle embodied is a very wide one, and it applies in all regions of life and activity, intellectual, scholastic, philanthropic, social. Wherever men are thinking God's thoughts and trying to carry into effect any phase or side of God's manifold purposes of good and blessing to the world, there it is true. Every man who is trying to make men understand God's thought, whether it is expressed in creation, or whether it is written in history, or whether it is graven in half-obliterated letters on the constitution of human nature,—every man who, in any region of society or life, is seeking to effect the great designs of the universal loving Father—can take to himself, in the measure and according to the manner of his special activity, the great encouragement of the text, and feel that he, too, is a fellow-helper to the truth and a fellow-worker with God.

¶ The apse of Amiens is the first virgin perfect work—Parthenon also in that sense—of Gothic Architecture. Who built it, shall we ask? God, and Man—is the first and most true answer. The stars in their courses built it, and the nations. Greek Athena labours here—and Roman Father Jove, and Guardian Mars. The Gaul labours here, and the Frank: knightly Norman—mighty Ostrogoth—and wasted anchorite of Idumea. The actual Man who built it scarcely cared to tell you he did so; nor do the historians brag of him. Any quantity of heraldries of knaves and fainéants you may find in what they call their "history": but this is probably the first time you ever read the name of Robert of Luzarches. I say he "scarcely cared"—we are not sure that he cared at all. He signed his name nowhere that I can hear of. You may perhaps find some recent initials cut by English remarkable visitors, desirous of immortality, here



and there about the edifice, but Robert the builder—or at least the Master of building, cut *his* on no stone of it.<sup>1</sup>

## I.

## WE ARE FELLOW-WORKERS WITH ONE ANOTHER.

The men who had ministered at Corinth, and around whose names factions were forming, differed in their gifts. St. Paul was the wisest master-builder who dealt with massive fundamentals. The elaboration of his artistic successors would not have counted for much without Pauline teaching for corner and foundation-stone. Some people would have liked to see more paint, gilding, embellishment on his granite. The task of Apollos was chiefly one of garniture, useful and fitted to attract, but vain without the bulwark of well-tested logic behind and beneath it. Gifts are diverse no less than the crowns which shall recompense the faithful use of gifts, but the work is one.

¶ Convenience, that admirable branch system from the main line of self-interest, makes us all fellow-helpers in spite of adverse resolutions. It is probable that no speculative or theological hatred would be ultimately strong enough to resist the persuasive power of convenience: that a latitudinarian baker, whose bread was honourably free from alum, would command the custom of any dyspeptic Puseyite; that an Arminian with the toothache would prefer a skilful Calvinistic dentist to a bungler stanch against the doctrines of Election and Final Perseverance, who would be likely to break the tooth in his head; and that a Plymouth Brother, who had a well-furnished grocery shop in a favourable vicinage, would occasionally have the pleasure of furnishing sugar or vinegar to orthodox families that found themselves unexpectedly “out of” these indispensable commodities.<sup>2</sup>

¶ There was a story that when the Anglo-Catholic Library was being discussed, Mr. Keble said to Dr. Moberly, “Well, *you* shall undertake the Anglo part and *I* the Catholic, and we will fight over the hyphen.”<sup>3</sup>

(1) In the building of Solomon’s Temple there were counted out by the king seventy thousand men for the sole purpose of

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin, *The Bible of Amiens* (*Works*, xxxiii. 131).

<sup>2</sup> George Eliot, *Janet’s Repentance*.

<sup>3</sup> C. A. E. Moberly, *Dulce Domum*, 82.

bearing burdens. No doubt this grew irksome to these men, and they would many a time wish for some other work on the structure, and perhaps envy the men who were skilful to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, in iron, in purple, in blue, and in crimson. But without them the Temple could never have been built. Their work was absolutely essential. And so it seems that in the building of the spiritual temple, many have been counted out by the king just to bear burdens. Tedious and wearisome as their lots are, yet nothing they do that makes for spiritual growth, purity of life, or cleanness of soul, can fail to subserve God's great purpose of erecting a world-wide spiritual temple upon this sin-stained world.

¶ There was a sharp discussion the other day in a gentleman's kitchen. One speaker said to another, "I am ashamed of you; we ought not to be in the same house together; you are common and vulgar-looking, besides being scratched and chipped all over. Look at *me*; there is not a flaw upon all my surface; my beauty is admired; my place in the house is a place of honour." The other speaker was not boisterous, there was no resentment in the tone of the reply: "It is true that you are beautiful, and that I am very common, but that is not the only difference between us. See how you are cared for; you are protected by a glass shade; you are dusted with a brush made of the softest feathers; everybody in approaching you is warned of your delicacy. It is very different with *me*; whenever water is wanted I am taken to the well; when servants are done with me they almost fling me down; I am used for all kinds of work; and there never was a scullery-maid in the house who did not think herself good enough to speak of me with contempt." It is so with men. Some of us live under glass shades; others of us are as vessels in common wear; but we could not change places; each must do his proper work, and each will have his appropriate reward.<sup>1</sup>

Is it the work that makes life great and true?

Or the true soul that, working as it can,

Does faithfully the task it has to do,

And keepeth faith alike with God and man?

Ah! well; the work is something; the same gold

Or brass is fashioned now into a coin,

Now into fairest chalice that shall hold

To panting lips the sacramental wine:

<sup>1</sup> J. Parker.

Here the same marble forms a cattle-trough  
For brutes by the wayside to quench their thirst,  
And there a god emerges from the rough  
Unshapely block—yet they were twins at first.

One pool of metal in the melting pot  
A sordid, or a sacred thought inspires;  
And of twin marbles from the quarry brought  
One serves the earth, one glows with altar-fires.

There's something in high purpose of the soul  
To do the highest service to its kind;  
There's something in the art that can unroll  
Secrets of beauty shaping in the mind.

Yet he who takes the lower room, and tries  
To make his cattle-trough with honest heart,  
And could not frame the god with gleaming eyes,  
As nobly plays the more ignoble part.

And maybe, as the higher light breaks in  
And shows the meaner task he has to do,  
He is the greater that he strives to win  
Only the praise of being just and true.

For who can do no thing of sovran worth  
Which men shall praise, a higher task may find,  
Plodding his dull round on the common earth,  
But conquering envies rising in the mind.

And God works in the little as the great  
A perfect work, and glorious over all—  
Or in the stars that choir with joy elate,  
Or in the lichen spreading on the wall.<sup>1</sup>

(2) Besides seventy thousand men to bear burdens for the Temple, there were told off eighty thousand men to hew stone and wood in the mountains. These men had a task both laborious and uninviting. Although the Temple! could never have been built without them, yet the pleasure was denied them of seeing, while they worked, the great and glorious edifice arise on Mount Moriah. And so, to-day, the Lord has His hewers of wood and stone in the mountains. To them is given hard and unresponsive tasks. They labour all the day, and catch no

<sup>1</sup> Walter C. Smith, "Work and Spirit."

glimpse of the House that is being built for Jehovah, helped by their labour. But still, without them, the House could never have been built.

¶ The close sympathy between the Scotch people and the Scotch gentry in most of the national struggles has been one great cause of that admirable firmness of national character which learnt at last to dispense with leadership. In Ireland, in spite of adverse circumstances, this attachment between landlord and tenant in many particular instances was undoubtedly formed, but in general there could be no real confidence between the classes. When the people awoke to political life, they found their natural leaders their antagonists; they were compelled to look for other chiefs, and they often found them in men who were inferior in culture, in position, and in character, who sought their suffrages for private ends, and who won them by fulsome flattery, false rhetoric, and exaggerated opinions.<sup>1</sup>

¶ From Bellinzona (after a day or two's excursion to Locarno) Ruskin drove to the head of the lake, and took the steamer for Baveno and the Isola Bella. Writing thence to his father (July 8), Ruskin mentions a political observation which made a great impression on him, for he used it more than once as an illustration in his economic writings:—

“No pity nor respect can be felt for these people, who have sunk and remain sunk, merely by idleness and wantonness in the midst of all blessings and advantages: who cannot so much as bank out—or in—a mountain stream, because, as one of their priests told me the other day, every man always acts for himself: they will never act together and do anything at common expense for the common good; but every man tries to embank his own land and throw the stream upon his neighbours; and so the stream masters them all and sweeps its way down all the valley in victory. This I heard from the curate of a mountain chapel at Bellinzona, when I went every evening to draw his garden.”<sup>2</sup>

(3) There were men skilful to work in gold and silver, brass, iron, stone, linen, purple, and crimson, and to grave all manner of gravings and devise all manner of devices. These were the outstanding men of genius, of whom only a few were needed.

¶ To Sir Christopher Wren belongs the undying honour of having designed the great cathedral of St. Paul, with its world-famous dome, in London. But Sir Christopher Wren could never

<sup>1</sup> W. E. H. Lecky, *A History of Ireland*, i. 280.

<sup>2</sup> E. T. Cook, *The Life of Ruskin*, i. 517.

in a million years have built the dome alone. He was dependent upon the humblest labourers who toiled upon the hidden base, or reared the turrets of the mighty structure, as they were dependent upon him. In so far as they used to the uttermost their talents and opportunities, to them is due a full share of the glory.<sup>1</sup>

¶ One day at Perth Bishop Wilkinson (late of Truro) noticed a thin-faced boy looking as if he wanted to speak to him, and he went up to him, asking if the boy wished to speak to him. "No, sir," said the boy, "only I sing in the same choir as you are in." The Bishop's friends laughed at the boy's idea of his association with the Bishop in the Church, but the boy was not laughed at by the Bishop.<sup>2</sup>

¶ The world itself might be redeemed by hopefulness and organized co-operation. Ruskin may have lacked the practical gift; but he was possessed by the vision:—

(*To his Mother*) "Verona, June 18.—Yesterday, it being quite cool, I went for a walk, and as I came down from a rather quiet hillside a mile or two out of town, I passed a house where the women were at work spinning the silk off the cocoons. There was a sort of whirring sound as in an English mill; but at intervals they sang a long sweet chant, all together, lasting about two minutes, then pausing a minute, and then beginning again. It was good and tender music, and the multitude of voices prevented any sense of failure, so that it was all very lovely and sweet, and like the things that I mean to try to bring to pass."<sup>3</sup>

## II.

### WE ARE FELLOW-WORKERS FOR GOD.

1. Every Christian man and woman is invested with the power, and is therefore burdened with the honourable obligation to work for God. Man's communion with his Maker is not only a fellowship of worship but also a fellowship of service.

¶ What were Ruskin's methods in his other and more general manners, when he had the single view of making himself understood and said what he desired in the best words he could find for it? What was his secret? He would have told us, I think, what he reported Turner as saying, "I know of no genius but the genius of hard work." There is no writer who gives a stronger impression of ease than Cardinal Newman—a great

<sup>1</sup> C. B. Keenleyside.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Bishop Wilkinson*, ii. 288.

<sup>3</sup> E. T. Cook, *The Life of Ruskin*, ii. 164.



master of simple and lucid English, greater in these particular respects, if we take the whole body of their writings, than Ruskin. Yet even Newman said: "I have been obliged to take great pains with everything I have written, and I often write chapters over and over again, besides innumerable corrections and interlined additions." Ruskin's method was the same. The search for the right word, for the fitting sentence, was often long; and paragraphs and chapters were written over and over again before they satisfied him. And this applies equally to his most simple writing, such as is to be found, for instance, in *The Elements of Drawing*; and to his most elaborate passages, such as the exordiums and perorations in *Modern Painters*, *The Seven Lamps*, and *The Stones of Venice*. He carried on the process to the stage of proofs, revises, and re-revises. Facsimiles of pages re-written on the printed proof are included in the Library Edition, and in this connection Dr. Furnivall gave me an anecdote. To Ruskin's father the publisher came one day exhibiting a thickly scored final revise and explaining that continuance in such practices would absorb all the author's profits. "Don't let my son know," said the old gentleman; "John must have his things as he likes them; pay him whatever would become due, apart from corrections, and send in a separate bill for them to me." Few authors, it may be feared, are blessed with so indulgent a parent.<sup>1</sup>

Be strong!

We are not here to play, to dream, to drift.

We have hard work to do, and loads to lift.

Shun not the struggle; face it. 'Tis God's gift.<sup>2</sup>

2. There is a sense in which every man is a worker for God. We cannot help fulfilling His purposes. All things serve Him, and He maketh even the wickedness of men work out His will.

(1) Through human agency the ancient miracle of creation is repeated. One great teaching of modern knowledge says nothing above a certain low level of excellence comes by natural law unaided by man; all best things in the world of nature are the result of his thought and toil. It is true that man can do absolutely nothing without God. He can create no new forces. All the material with which he works Nature has furnished. But what can he not do with it, and what has he done? He has modified

<sup>1</sup> E. T. Cook, *The Life of Ruskin*, i. 358.

<sup>2</sup> Maltbie D. Babcock.



climate, made the rivers change their course and even the ocean its shore, made forests grow and made new ground for them to grow in, made the parched ground a pool and the thirsty land springs of water. Eight hundred years ago there was no such country as the Holland of to-day; God had not made it. He made it possible, but man had to give it actual frame and form. The map of Holland is not even now what it was at the beginning of the last century; it has 120,000 more acres of land than it had then.

¶ I was deeply impressed by what a gardener once said to me concerning his work. "I feel, sir," he said, "when I am growing the flowers, or rearing the vegetables, that I am having a share in creation!" I thought it a very noble way of regarding his work.<sup>1</sup>

(2) In the realm of outward nature man works for God. It is man's part in evolution that has developed the moss-rose out of the wild-briar, the fine wheat out of the wild grasses. And in the animal kingdom the same thing is seen still more strikingly. The famous breeds of horses and cattle are man's creation—by development. Compare your sheep-dog or your setter with the wild canine stock. Association with man has evolved in them something almost of human intelligence and feeling. God gives man all things in the rough, as it were, and leaves him to develop them further; and without man's part faithfully performed, there could not be a loaf of bread evolved out of a wheat field, or a woollen coat out of a sheep's fleece.

¶ Nature knew enough to make textile fibres, but never knew enough to weave a piece of cotton. It never brought out a yard of broadcloth. Nature knew how to make a worm, and the worm knew how to make a garment of death for itself, but nature never made silk. Nature made iron, but never made a tool—not one; and yet, what are the hands of man without tools? Men could not have risen above barbarism but for them.<sup>2</sup>

(3) In his own training and saving, in the work of developing personal faculty and character, man is a worker with God. Man's own will and effort constitute one of the factors in his progress. You remember the little child's quaint answer to the question, "Who made you?" Said she, "God made me so long, and I grewed the rest myself." "Out of the mouth of babes and

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Jowett,

<sup>2</sup> H. W. Beecher.

sucklings hast thou ordained strength!" The little girl's answer touched the very heart of the matter. We are made, intellectually and morally, just about so long; that is not our doing—"it is he that hath made us and not we ourselves"—but, after all, there is a good deal that we have to "grow ourselves" and that we can grow ourselves.

¶ Theodore Parker used to say that man's life was only about three parts out of the hundred freedom, the rest, necessity. That is not much to claim for free-will—the veriest necessarian might concede that much! But then, even three per cent. of moral freedom, if made the most of, and constantly turned over, may mount up gradually to a considerable increase of that stock-in-trade with which man started. That little three per cent. of free effort has brought man from skins to broadcloth; from the wigwam to the modern house; from the rough tradition chanted by the camp fire to the printed book; from the rude torch to the electric light. In religion, it has brought man from the instinct of fetish-worship to the communion of spiritual prayer; and in morality, from the measureless revenge of the savage to the measured law "for a tooth only a tooth," and on to the unmeasured law of forgiveness "unto seventy times seven"! In a word it is that little free part of man's own, even if it be only three per cent., which, not buried in the napkin of indolence or fatalism, but put out to interest in busy striving life, has brought man from savagism up to civilization, and in which lie the possibilities of further progress still—the potentialities of the hero, sage and saint in this world, to say nothing of the angel in the life to come.<sup>1</sup>

(4) It is through men that God helps and saves men and creates His new heavens and His new earth. Out of humanity come the Divine helpers of humanity. God in the world reconciling it to Himself means in human life God in Christ and God in men whom Christ inspires, God choosing and using men to be the instruments of His purpose, the messengers of His mercy and grace, the doers of His word. There was no want of faith, or reverence, or humility in Martin Luther, and yet he could say in his own bold, earnest way, "God needs strong men; He cannot get along without them."

¶ The highest of all privileges is to share with God the work of re-creation. There are no flowers so winsome as those you

<sup>1</sup> B. Herford.

have grown in your own garden, and there is no life that gives you such joy and such delicacy of spiritual food as the life you have helped to make beautiful by your own heart's blood. When you have worked with the Lord in the creation of another man's joy, a most delicately flavoured joy visits your own heart. Let us regard every man as a possible sphere of service, and set to work to turn the untilled field into a garden.<sup>1</sup>

Wherefore hast Thou withdrawn Thee from my sight,  
O Shepherd? Yesterday in glad delight  
I walked serene, rejoicing in the light.  
O Shepherd, Shepherd, Shepherd, seek Thy sheep!

But yesterday my soul was all aflame  
If but the faintest whisper of Thy name  
Ineffable to my rapt spirit came.  
O Shepherd, Shepherd, Shepherd, seek Thy sheep!

The waters that refreshed me yesterday,  
The sweet green fields that cheered me on my way  
Afford no comfort to my soul to-day.  
O Shepherd, Shepherd, Shepherd, seek Thy sheep!

Around me the fair world is bathed in light,  
All nature breathes to God her calm delight;  
And I, alone, stumble in blackest night.  
O Shepherd, Shepherd, Shepherd, seek Thy sheep!

Why dost Thou leave me on the mountain side  
When all my soul cries out for Thee to guide,  
Desiring nought in earth or heaven beside?  
O Shepherd, Shepherd, Shepherd, seek Thy sheep!

Why dost Thou leave me thus? If Thou art near,  
Succour me speedily. Each step I fear.  
Oh let Thy voice fall on my straining ear.  
O Shepherd, Shepherd, Shepherd, seek Thy sheep!

Thy voice——? Nay, but across the lonely track  
A faint cry from a soul in bitter lack.  
Is it Thy voice?—Shepherd, I turn me back  
And hasten, joyful, to seek out Thy sheep.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Jowett.

<sup>2</sup> Margaret Blaikie, *Songs by the Way*, 39.

## III.

## WE ARE FELLOW-WORKERS WITH GOD.

We are fellow-workers, and we are fellow-workers for God. But, more than that, we are fellow-workers with God. It is God's field we are tilling, it is God's house we are building together, and God is with us in the work. He and we till the field and build the house together. We are *God's* fellow-workers.

"*God's* fellow-workers!" What a title! How august the dignity! What distinction it confers upon us! The conjunction is almost incredible. God the eternal, infinite. The omniscient and omnipotent! Man, crushed before the moth, chilled and smitten by the November fog! And yet these two terms, significant of frailty and almightiness, are brought into this marvellous association, and we are described as "fellow-workers"! We do not wonder that John Calvin, in seeking an exposition of these words, describes one side of the partnership as "composed of mere worms of the dust." But a worm in conjunction with the Almighty becomes a powerful fellow-worker.

¶ Is there anything more fragile than the incandescent mantle? You blow upon it and it falls into dust. It will not bear the rough touch even of the gentlest finger. And yet this flimsy substance can co-operate with a tremendous energy and contribute in the production of dazzling light. And here we are, mere children of the dust, frail and flimsy as this mantle. And yet, when we are in league with the Almighty, we become exceedingly serviceable, and fruitful in great things. We can be fellow-workers with God; such a dignity ought to make us walk with sanctified erectness.<sup>1</sup>

¶ When a mother says to her little child who is carrying some little burden from one room to another, "You *are* helping me," what stature it gives to the little soul, and what a sense of dignity and place in life's affairs.

¶ Suppose a great painter, a Raphael or a Turner, taking a little boy that cleaned his brushes, and saying to him, "Come into my studio, and I will let you do a bit of work upon my picture." Suppose an aspirant, an apprentice in any walk of life, honoured by being permitted to work along with some one who was recognized all over the world as being at the very top of that

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Jowett.

special profession. Would it not be a feather in the boy's cap all his life? And would he not think it the greatest honour that ever had been done him that he was allowed to co-operate, in however inferior a fashion, with such an one? Jesus Christ says to us, "Come and work here side by side with Me."<sup>1</sup>

1. As we are joint-labourers with God, we must learn the lesson of mutual dependence.

(1) *We are dependent on God.*—We cannot do the smallest part of our work without His co-operation. Here is the secret of humility. Alike in the development of our own inner lives and in our ministry for others, we must be destitute of prosperity and progress, if it were not that God is working in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. So let us bid farewell to every shred and vestige of pride. If it were not for our Divine ally, we should be shamed and driven in dishonour from the field.

¶ When first the greatness of the scientific thought of evolution burst upon the wondering mind of our time, there was an idea that it would almost cut away the ground from under religion. Perhaps this feeling was never expressed—and at the same time its shallowness exposed—better than in the saying of Frances Power Cobbe. "It is a curious thing," said Miss Cobbe, "that as soon as men find out how anything is done, they should immediately rush to the conclusion that God did not do it." But that idea is pretty well past. God's part in Evolution becomes only more evident the more the subject is examined. We cannot get that idea of evolution to work, we cannot keep it working, without recognizing, behind all things and in all things, some mighty, mysterious power and energy, which, the more we look at it, the more we have to think of it as life and will, and to call it by some name of God.<sup>2</sup>

(2) *God is dependent on us.*—In his controversy with the late John Stuart Mill, the French philosopher Comte said, "My Deity, that is, Humanity, has this advantage over yours: He needs help." The English philosopher met the charge by saying, "The theist's God is not omnipotent; He can be helped, great worker though He be." What Mill described as "the feeling of helping God" has always been cherished by the most sincere and earnest believers in the power of God over all.

<sup>1</sup> A. Maclaren.

<sup>2</sup> B. Herford.

Lord, when we pray, "Thy kingdom come!"  
 Then fold our hands without a care  
 For souls whom Thou hast died to save,  
 We do but mock Thee with our prayer.

Thou couldst have sent an angel band  
 To call Thine erring children home;  
 And thus through heavenly ministries  
 On earth Thy kingdom might have come.

But since to human hands like ours  
 Thou hast committed work divine,  
 Shall not our eager hearts make haste  
 To join their feeble powers with Thine?

To word and work shall not our hands  
 Obedient move, nor lips be dumb,  
 Lest through our sinful love of ease,  
 Thy kingdom should delay to come?

2. As we are fellow-workers with God let us work in harmony with God and by God's method.

(1) It behoves us to work in *harmony* with Him. Co-operation with God is a question of knowing, of being conscious of it. It is impossible to divorce ourselves from God. In spite of us He will realize His will in us. He cannot overcome our will, but even through our opposing will He will accomplish His purpose. But we may be willing fellow-workers. It is the difference between opposition to God's will, together with the shamefaced confession that we cannot help doing His work, and willing co-operation with His will, together with the consciousness of being recognized by Him as fellow-workers.

¶ Says Ruskin, "You will find it needful to live, if it be with success, according to God's Law; and the first uttered article in it is, 'In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread.'"<sup>1</sup>

¶ The conduct of life becomes like the experience of the brave Nansen in his attempt to reach the Pole. Men had struggled northward through weary days from the Greenland side, only to find at the end of each day's march that they had been swept farther south by a current which moved the whole pack of ice

<sup>1</sup> E. T. Cook, *The Life of Ruskin*, ii. 329.



beneath their feet. Then the Norwegian explorer made himself a labourer together with God, through the Siberian approach, and gave himself to the mighty sweep of the polar current, so that the law which he had discovered bore him towards the realization of his dream. It is the same with every honest desire to do right. The current of God's laws is under you; the movement of things is with you; you are a labourer together with God.

(2) If we are working in willing co-operation with God, we will be content to work by God's *method*. And if we wish to know what God's method is, we have but to look at Jesus Christ. Now we know that the method of God for Jesus Christ involved self-sacrifice, pain, weariness, utter self-oblivious devotion, as well as gentleness, tenderness, infinite pity, and love running over. If we felt that side by side with us, like two sailors hauling on one rope, "the Servant of the Lord" was toiling, would it not burn up all our selfishness, and light up all our indifference, and make us spend ourselves in His service?

¶ Men's lives bear the aspects of deserts and wildernesses, and God wants them to be as beautiful as the Garden of Eden—aye, more beautiful. The "paradise of God" in the book of Revelation is a far more lovely garden than the Garden of Eden; the first was the garden of innocence, the latter is the garden of holiness. Man fell from innocence; he may attain unto the garden of holiness; but the attainment is made possible by the awful happenings in the Garden of Gethsemane. Now if we are to be fellow-workers in creating the garden of holiness we too must know something of the agonies of Gethsemane. We must know "the fellowship of his sufferings." We can do nothing of this high gardening except through the ministry of sacrificial blood. When we are willing to bleed, in order that other lives may be beautiful, we shall be sharing the travail of the whole creation. It is no use playing at spiritual gardening; it is a thing of agony and bloody sweat.<sup>1</sup>

Whose is the speech  
That moves the voices of this lonely beech?  
Out of the long West did this wild wind come—  
Oh strong and silent! And the tree was dumb,  
Ready and dumb until  
The dumb gale struck it on the darkened hill.

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Jowett.



Two memories,  
 Two powers, two promises, two silences  
 Closed in this cry, closed in these thousand leaves  
 Articulate. This sudden hour retrieves  
     The purpose of the past,  
 Separate, apart—embraced, embraced at last.

“Whose is the word?  
 Is it I that spake? Is it thou? Is it I that heard?”  
 “Thine earth was solitary; yet I found thee!”  
 “Thy sky was pathless, but I caught, I bound thee,  
     Thou visitant divine.”  
 “O thou my Voice, the word was thine.” “Was thine.”<sup>1</sup>

3. The fact that our work is conjoined with the Divine is the root of *motive*. It ought ever to be an adequate inspiration to us that the work is God's, and that He has called us into His fellowship. Is not the motive that stirs in His heart and moves His stupendous activities without ceasing sufficient for us? What is good enough to engage the majestic energies of God is surely good enough for us. Does the work that beseems His matchless sovereignty need commendation from us, or the high seal of our rank and prestige? Into the work He touches with His sceptred hand on the one side, and which we are permitted to touch with our feeble hands of flesh on the other, He reflects all the glory of His attributes.

¶ It is said that when Phidias was preparing the figures for the Acropolis, the work was perfect even in the smallest details, although these figures were to stand upon a background so high that nobody could see them. A sculptor was working at the hair of one of them with minute fidelity, when some one said to him, “What is the use of that expenditure of time and labour? Nobody will ever see your work.” The workman replied, “Yes, the gods will see it!”

Christ, by Thine own darkened hour  
     Live within my heart and brain!  
     Let my hands not slip the rein.

Ah, how long ago it is  
     Since a comrade rode with me!  
     Now a moment let me see

<sup>1</sup> Alice Meynell.

Thyself, lonely in the dark,  
Perfect, without wound or mark.<sup>1</sup>

4. The fact that the work is God's is our strong *encouragement*. He who works for the redemption of men from the deepest evil of their life will not long want the sign that God works. The sign is so universal that we have perhaps ceased to call it a sign.

¶ A short time ago I saw a well-kept flower-garden blooming in the little angle of ground formed at the junction of two railway lines. The helpless flowers were thriving there in spite of the terrible forces that came so near them on every side. If you were to put an untaught savage inside the garden hedge and let him hear the screaming engines and see the files of carriages or the trucks laden with coal, timber, and iron converging towards this fairy oasis, he would be ready to say, "These beautiful things will be torn to shreds in a moment." But behind the garden fences there are the lines of strong, faithful steel keeping each engine and carriage and truck in its appointed place, and though the air vibrates with destructive force, and pansy, primrose, and geranium live in a world of tremors, not a silken filament is snapped, and not a petal falls untimely to the earth. In the very angle of these forces the frailest life is unharmed. So with the fine spiritual husbandries that foster faith in the souls around us. The air hurtles with fierce hostilities. The mechanisms of diabolic temptation encroach on every side upon our work. Public-house, gaming-club, and ill-ordered home, threaten disasters of which we do not like to think. The air quivers with anger of demons. Yet the work is God's, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. In the very angle of these demoniac forces the work shall thrive, for the hidden lines of His protecting power are round about it.<sup>2</sup>

Just where you stand in the conflict,  
There is your place!  
Just where you think you are useless,  
Hide not your face!  
God placed you there for a purpose,  
Whate'er it be;  
Think you He has chosen you for it:  
Work loyally.

<sup>1</sup> Padraic Colum.

<sup>2</sup> T. G. Selby.

Gird on your armour! be faithful  
At toil or rest,  
Whiche'er it be, never doubting  
God's way is best.  
Out in the fight, or on picket,  
Stand firm and true;  
This is the work which your Master  
Gives you to do.

5. The fact that we are linked with God in His service is our pledge of *victory*. If God works with us, success is sure. If God is doing this work, then God's strength, God's skill, God's knowledge are employed upon it. We are no longer discouraged and enfeebled by the sense of our own incapacity, our own ignorance and inexperience, our own faint hearts and feeble hands. There is beside us an inexhaustible fountain of ability, from which we can draw. It is God's work. Therefore it must be triumphant. There is no place for misgiving or despondency. No sense of personal frailty, no calculation of opposing odds, no menaces of approaching evil, no symptoms of immediate failure—none of these can appal us. God's work is eternal. Nothing can prevail against it. There may be temporary defeats, partial fallings back. Men may come and men may go. But what then? "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever."

¶ A noble cause cannot of itself make a man noble. We must despair of growing great, unless we can feel that we are given to the cause to work for it, and not it to work for us. In the old torch races of Pan, the rule was that each runner should hold his torch as long as it kept its light, but when he flagged he must hand it to another who stood ready girded to follow up the race. And so it must be with us. We must recognize the great end of all this panting, and running, and toiling, not that you or I should reach the goal, and be rich or honoured in men's mouths, but that the torch of truth that was put into our hands when we started should reach the people at the end all alight with truth as when we took it. Let it be our hands, if we can, that bring it there, and then the honour shall be ours; but that must not be our end, and when we see it sinking and going out, let no petty conceit or unfledged pride keep us from giving it to a fresher and stronger man, with a hearty Godspeed to run the

next stage of the same great journey. Thus we win a broadness, and deepness, and fulness of character that sinks all little human ventures like the sea.<sup>1</sup>

¶ It is said that the engineer who planned the Brooklyn bridge—one of the most colossal triumphs of scientific skill in the world—was a bed-ridden invalid; and that with the help of a telescope he watched the bridge grow into shape day by day from his couch of paralysis and pain. He triumphed because the great thought in a fragile frame was conjoined with all but exhaustless capital and the illimitable labour that capital could bring into the field.<sup>2</sup>

I cannot do it alone,  
The waves run fast and high,  
And the fogs close chill around,  
And the light goes out in the sky;  
But I know that we two  
Shall win in the end—  
Jesus and I.

I cannot row it myself,  
My boat on the raging sea;  
But beside me sits Another  
Who pulls or steers with me,  
And I know that we two  
Shall come safe into port—  
His child and He.

Coward and wayward and weak,  
I change with the changing sky;  
To-day so eager and brave,  
To-morrow not caring to try;  
But He never gives in,  
So we two shall win—  
Jesus and I.

Strong and tender and true,  
Crucified once for me!  
He will not change, I know,  
Whatever I may be!  
But all He says I must do,  
Ever from sin to keep free.  
We shall finish our course  
And reach home at last—  
His child and He.

<sup>1</sup> Phillips Brooks, *Life*, 53.

<sup>2</sup> T. G. Selby.



THE TEACHER'S GREAT TEXT.

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## THE TEACHER'S GREAT TEXT.

For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. But if any man buildeth on the foundation gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble; each man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is.—1 Cor. iii. 11-13.

1. THE vivid imagination of St. Paul puts before us here an important truth in a picturesque form. Two workmen are building side by side. One builds a palace, the other a hovel. The materials which one uses are gold and silver, for decoration; and for solidity costly stones, by which is not meant diamonds and emeralds and the like, but valuable building material, such as marbles and granites and alabaster. The other employs timber, dry reeds, straw. No doubt in Corinth, as in all ancient cities, side by side with the temples shining in marble and Corinthian brass were the huts of the poor and of slaves built of such flimsy materials as these. Suddenly there plays around both buildings a great fire, the fire of the Lord coming to Judgment. The marbles gleam the whiter, and the gold and the silver flash the more resplendently, whilst the tongues of light leap about them; but the straw hovel goes up in a flare! The one man gets wages for work that lasts, the other man gets no pay for what perishes. He is dragged through the smoke, saved by a hair's breadth, but sees all his toil lying there in white ashes at his feet.

¶ The building, if it be really of gold, silver, and precious stones, is not destroyed. It becomes rather, in due course, the foundation on which the new superstructure is reared. Is not that the meaning of the somewhat difficult lines in Browning's "Aristophanes' Apology"?—

And what's my teaching but—accept the old,  
Contest the strange! acknowledge work that's done,  
Misdoubt men who have still their work to do!  
Religions, laws and customs, poetries,

Are old? So much achieved victorious truth!  
 Each work was product of a lifetime, wrung  
 From each man by an adverse world: for why?  
 He worked, destroying other older work  
 Which the world loved and so was loth to lose.  
 Whom the world beat in battle—dust and ash!  
 Who beat the world, left work in evidence,  
 And wears its crown till new men live new lives,  
 And fight new fights, and triumph in their turn.<sup>1</sup>

2. The original application of these words is distinctly to Christian teachers. The whole section starts from a rebuke of the party spirit in the Corinthian Church which led them to swear by Paul or Peter or Apollos, and to despise all teachers but their own favourite. The Apostle reminds these jangling partisans that all teachers are but instruments in God's hands, who is the true Worker, the true Husbandman, the true Builder. That word opens up a whole region of thought to his ardent mind. He goes on to speak of the foundation which God has laid, namely, the mission of Jesus Christ. That foundation laid once for all in actual reality, in the historical facts of our Lord's life, death, and resurrection, had been laid in preaching by St. Paul when he founded the Corinthian Church. There cannot be two foundations. So all other teachers at Corinth have only to build on that foundation, that is, to carry on a course of Christian teaching which rests upon that fundamental truth. Let all such teachers take heed what sort of materials they build on that foundation, that is to say, what sort of teaching they offer; for there may be gold, and silver, and precious stones—solid and valuable instruction; or there may be timber, and hay, and straw—worthless and unsubstantial teaching. The materials with which the teachers build are evidently the instruction which they give, or the doctrines which they teach.

This, then, is the teacher's Great Text. The teacher's work is spoken of as building, with the certainty that one day the building will be tested by fire. Let us consider—

- I. The Foundation.
- II. The Building.
- III. The Fire.

<sup>1</sup> J. Flew, *Studies in Browning*, 200.

## I.

## THE FOUNDATION.

1. *The Foundation is already laid.*—"Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid." It was laid in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was laid before St. Paul himself or any of the Apostles began to teach.

A paradox which found favour with some of the earlier moods of German Rationalism went to the effect that St. Paul and not Jesus Christ was the real founder of Christendom. How the writer of the indignant appeal to the Corinthians, "Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" could ever have been seated, by the convictions of any intelligent readers of his Epistles, in his Master's place, might well raise our wonder, if experience did not prove that of all credulity the easiest is that which is enjoined by unbelief, and of all theories, the wildest are those which are put forward in order to discredit the creed of Christendom. If the Church is built upon the labour of Apostles, as her foundation, the Apostles themselves rested on the Chief Corner-stone. And, indeed, since Schleiermacher, the paradox in question has been discredited well-nigh everywhere. It is one of that great man's many claims to honour, that he did more than any other writer in his day and country to reassert Christ's true historical relation to the Christian Church.

¶ In a lecture, given in St. George's, Edinburgh, Principal Rainy made this comparison between Jesus and Paul: "We can easily mark the tie between the two; we also easily feel the difference. In both, there is goodwill to men below; in both, a constant reference to One above. But in the true manhood of our Lord, we own something serener, more self-contained and sovereign. The love to His Father moves in great tides of even perpetual flow. The love to men is a pure compassion, whose perfect goodness delights in bringing its sympathy and its help to the neediest and the worst, does so with a perfect understanding and an unreserved self-communication. When He speaks, He speaks in the language of His time and land and circumstances, but He speaks like one who addresses human nature itself, finding the way to the common mind and common heart of every land and every age and every condition. When He reasons, it is not like one who is clearing his own thoughts, but like one who turns away from the perversity of the caviller,

or who, for the perplexed inquirer, brings into view the elements of the spiritual world he was overlooking or forgetting. And with what resource—none the less His that He rejoiced to think of it as His Father's—does He confront whatever comes to Him in life! As we watch Him, there grows upon us the strongest sense of a perfect inner harmony with Himself and with His Father that lives through all changes. Finally, standing in this world, He declares the order of another and a higher world. He does it as one who knew it, who speaks what He had seen.

"We turn to Paul, and we perceive him also to be great; great thoughts, great affections, great efforts, great fruits are his. But he is not great in the manner of his Master. He goes through the world full of a noble self-censure that bows him willingly to the earth, and of a passionate gratitude that cannot speak its thanks but offers up its life. Like his Master, while he reverences the order of this world and of society as God has framed it, he is at the same time full of the relations of a world unseen. To that world unseen he already belongs; it determines for him, and for all who will listen to him, the whole manner of thought and life and feeling in this world; it holds him, it inspires him. But it is in the manner of faith rather than of knowledge, of earnest rather than of possession. Especially, the influence that has mastered him and is the secret of his power and nobleness, has not brought him to the final harmony of all his powers. It has, on the contrary, committed him to an inward conflict, a fight of faith, which he will never cease to wage till the final victory crowns him. This man knows the inward weakness and the inward disgrace of Sin. He knows forgiveness and repentance, and good hope through grace. The Lord received sinners and sat and ate with them; but this man was himself a sinner who was forgiven much and loved much. That was the Saviour: this, a pattern of them that should believe on Him to life everlasting."<sup>1</sup>

2. *The Foundation is Jesus Christ.*—"Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." What does the Apostle mean by "Jesus Christ"? The one thing fundamental, according to the teaching of St. Paul, and according to the teaching of Jesus Himself, is faith in Jesus as the Divine Redeemer of the world. In opposition to this faith there is a Religion of the Human Christ. If we look at the points in which the Religion of a Human Christ differs from the Christian faith

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Principal Rainy*, i. 426.

we shall see what the Apostle means when he says that the foundation is Jesus Christ.

¶ Two rival views are claiming the allegiance of the present generation. The one finds the basis of Christianity in the teaching of a man, inspired as Moses was inspired and more inspired, Divine as Shakespeare was Divine and more Divine, but now dead in the sense in which Moses is dead and Shakespeare is dead. The other finds the basis of Christianity in the ever-living Person of God for men made Man. Such are the views which, in some form or other, confront each one of us, and between which, sooner or later, we must make our solemn choice.<sup>1</sup>

(1) In the first place, the religion of a Human Christ as it is represented, for example, in Renan's *Life of Jesus* or in Robert Elsmere, gives us as our leader, as the centre of our faith, as the object of our reverence, a human hero.

¶ The last movement of Ruskin's mind had been away from evangelical faith; it had coincided with his growing admiration of the great worldly, irreligious painters; his religion had become "the religion of humanity," though "full of sacred colour and melancholy shade"; his teaching had been in such exhortations as may be based on intellectual scepticism. But while engaged on drawing Giotto's frescoes, "I discovered," he says, "the fallacy under which I had been tormented for sixteen years—the fallacy that Religious artists were weaker than Irreligious. I found that all Giotto's 'weaknesses' (so called) were merely absences of material science. He did not know, and could not, in his day, so much of perspective as Titian—so much of the laws of light and shade, or so much of technical composition. But I found he was in the make of him, and contents, a very much stronger and greater man than Titian; that the things I had fancied easy in his work, because they were so unpretending and simple, were nevertheless entirely inimitable; that the Religion in him, instead of weakening, had solemnized and developed every faculty of his heart and hand; and finally, that his work, in all the innocence of it, was yet a human achievement and possession, quite above everything that Titian had ever done." This "discovery" affected, first, Ruskin's estimate of painters; and at Florence, presently, he set himself to write of Giotto and his works in Florence, as twenty years before, with a more reserved admiration for the master, he had written of *Giotto and his Works in Padua*.<sup>2</sup>

(2) In the second place, this Religion of a Human Christ blots

<sup>1</sup> F. Homes Dudden.

<sup>2</sup> E. T. Cook, *The Life of Ruskin*, ii. 253.



the resurrection out of the Gospel and gives us but a cross and a tomb. Let us read Robert Elsmere's speech to the working men of East London: "'He laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of a rock; and he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.' The ashes of Jesus of Nazareth mingled with the earth of Palestine—

Far hence he lies  
In the lone Syrian town,  
And on his grave, with shining eyes,  
The Syrian stars look down.

"He stopped. The melancholy cadence of the verse died away. Then a gleam broke over the pale, exhausted face—a gleam of extraordinary sweetness. 'And in the days and weeks that followed, the devout and passionate fancy of a few mourning Galileans begat the exquisite fable of the Resurrection. How natural, and amid all its falseness how true, is that naïve and contradictory story! The rapidity with which it spread is a measure of many things. It is, above all, a measure of the greatness of Jesus, of the force with which he had drawn to himself the hearts and imaginations of men.'"

¶ It may be true, as Mr. Nettleship has said, that "*A Death in the Desert* goes no single step in the direction of proving Christ's divinity as a dogma"; but the poem itself is void of all meaning, unless, in spite of its dramatic form, it can be regarded as setting forth the deepest conviction of the poet's own soul. Hence the verdict of the man who adds the final note is this:—

If Christ, as thou affirmest, be of men  
Mere man, the first and best but nothing more—  
Account Him, for reward of what He was,  
Now and for ever, wretchedest of all.<sup>1</sup>

(3) Thirdly, the Religion of a Human Christ offers to us a law and an example—nothing more; the religion of Christian faith offers us a Divine power.

¶ Mr. Gladstone has eloquently sketched in a few words the power of the Christian church: "Christianity both produced a type of character wholly new to the Roman world and it fundamentally altered the laws and institutions, the tone, temper, and tradition of that world. For example, it changed profoundly the

<sup>1</sup> J. Flew, *Studies in Browning*, 45.

relation of the poor to the rich, and the almost forgotten obligation of the rich to the poor. It abolished slavery, abolished human sacrifice, abolished gladiatorial shows, and a multitude of other horrors. It restored the position of woman in society. It prosecuted polygamy; and put down divorce, absolutely in the West, though not absolutely in the East. It made peace, instead of war, the normal and presumed relation between human societies. It exhibited life as a discipline, everywhere and in all its parts, and changed essentially the place and function of suffering in human experience. Accepting the ancient morality as far as it went, it not only enlarged but transfigured its teaching by the laws of humility and of forgiveness, and by a law of purity even more new and strange than these."

(4) In the fourth place, this Religion of a Human Christ offers a temporal and local religion in place of one that is as eternal and as universal as its Divine Author. Let Robert Elsmere again explain his position: "If you wish, Catherine, I will wait—I will wait till you bid me speak; but I warn you there is something dead in me, something gone and broken. It can never live again except in forms which now it would only pain you more to think of. It is not that I think differently of this point or that point, but of life and religion altogether. I see God's purposes in quite other proportions, as it were. Christianity seems to me something small and local. Behind it, around it, including it, I see the great drama of the world, sweeping on, led by God, from change to change, from act to act. It is not that Christianity is false, but that it is only an imperfect human reflection of a part of truth."

¶ It is a perfectly unique and very striking fact, that the views of Christ do not proceed from the concretely defined horizon of any age or any historical sphere, not even from His own. Mark the distinction in this respect between Christ and Socrates.<sup>1</sup>

3. *The Foundation is the Person of Christ—Christ Himself.*—This has been the teaching of the Church from the earliest day till now. In every age and in every land the Church has taught invariably that the one determining factor of the Christian religion is the Person of Jesus. That is the absolute, essential thing. The Christian religion is not a mere system of

<sup>1</sup> R. Rothe, *Still Hours*, 213.



doctrine. It is not a mere ethical code. It is not merely a redemptive social force. It is above all dependence on a Person. And therein lies its peculiarity and its novelty. A Church Father of the second century, being pressed with the question, "What new thing did the Lord bring by His coming?" replied, "Know that He brought all newness in bringing us Himself." The distinctive feature of the new religion is the Person of Jesus.

(1) It is Jesus Christ, and not doctrines about Jesus Christ. To say this is not to disparage the precious guidance of Scripture or Creeds or Councils. These Apostolic words, these later definitions, which furnish in our day the favourite topic for so much shallow declamation, are the voice of that Eternal Spirit by whom the whole Body is governed as well as sanctified. They guard and sustain in Christian thought the Divine Saviour's peerless honour; they forbid, in tones of merciful severity, false and degrading beliefs about Him. Yet He, our living Lord, is the foundation; and no one can altogether rest upon the formulæ which uphold and regulate our estimate of His Glory. We prize both Scripture and the Creeds for His sake, not Him for theirs; and to rest upon them, as distinct from Him whom they keep before us, would be like building a wall upon a measuring rule, instead of upon the block of granite, of which it has given us the noble dimensions.

¶ I do not agree with the saying imputed to some one, that God gave man religion, but the devil invented theology as a counterfeit. For theology is not the natural or proper antithesis to religion; still less its opposite or antagonist. It occupies a different sphere; and though dealing with the same subjects in great measure, yet its aim is, or should be, different; and it works by means of different faculties. Religion aims at the production of faith, hope and charity, and all the proper fruits of those graces. It would teach us to trust in God, and love Him, and to obey that second commandment, which is like unto the first both in its scope and in its importance and comprehensiveness—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." It is that which brings the human soul consciously into relation with God, with an unseen world and a spiritual kingdom, and with a future state of retribution. Religion, therefore, is an appeal to faith and also to conscience, both of which it seeks to quicken and exercise; so that we may be godly towards God, and righteous towards our neighbour, performing all our duties from a principle of obliga-

tion and reverence to the great Father who made and loves us all, and requires us to love, pity, and help one another, because of this our common origin and family relation. Religion also requires us to be sober or temperate—regulating the appetites of our bodies and the emotions and affections of our minds, so that we be not carried away by them beside or beyond the purposes for which they were implanted, but that they may further us in attaining perfection in this world, and at last eternal felicity.

Now, though theology deals in great part with the same subjects with which religion is concerned, it differs from it in several respects. Religion deals with those subjects in a practical way, chiefly with reference to conduct or life; and it appeals to all parts of our nature, to the affections and emotions as well as to the understanding. It works through hope and fear, and seeks to influence, to restrain, to stimulate, and to regulate—in short, to make us wise, holy, good, in all manner of conversation, that we may be “perfect in all the will of God.” On the other hand, theology is wholly theoretical or speculative. Its object is to reconcile certain apparent contradictions or inconsistencies, not only between different parts, or passages, or expressions of Scripture, but between Scriptural statements or doctrines, and the phenomena of the physical and moral world. For it must deal not only with the Bible but with facts; regarding the facts of nature and providence, and of general history and experience, as being, no less than the histories, doctrines and teachings of Scripture, revelations or manifestations of the Maker and Governor of the world. These all, proceeding from the same Divine source, are and must be really consistent, however at first sight they may sometimes appear to conflict one with another. It is therefore the province of theology to point out the harmony which underlies seeming opposition and discordance in the Word or ways of God, so that we may discern a real and profound order where at first sight confusion or contradiction presents itself to our minds. Thus, in the natural world, the law of gravitation being demonstrated to be a law operating throughout the universe, it is available to explain and reconcile a multitude of facts or appearances which seemed, to minds not instructed in this law of gravitation, to be unrelated, or even opposed and contradictory, one to another.<sup>1</sup>

(2) Still more true is it that it is Jesus Christ, and not feelings about Him. Feelings are great aids to devotion; they are often special gifts of God, the play of His Blessed Spirit

<sup>1</sup> Robert Lee.

upon our life of affection, raising it towards high and heavenly things. Yet what is so fugitive, so protean, so unreliable as a feeling? It comes and it is gone; it is intense, and forthwith it wanes; it promises much, and presently it yields nothing but a sense of moral languor and exhaustion that succeeds it. Feeling shouts "Hosanna" to-day, and to-morrow "Crucify"; it would pluck out its right eye for the apostle of its choice, and then suddenly he is become its enemy because he tells it the truth.

¶ I will tell you of a want I am beginning to experience very distinctly. I perceive more than ever the necessity of devotional reading. I mean the works of eminent holy persons, whose tone was not merely uprightness of character and highmindedness, but communion—a strong sense of personal and ever-living communion—with God besides. I recollect how far more peaceful my mind used to be when I was in the regular habit of reading daily, with scrupulous adherence to a plan, works of this description. A strong shock threw me off the habit—partly the external circumstances of my life, partly the perception of a most important fact, that devotional feelings are very distinct from uprightness and purity of life—that they are often singularly allied to the animal nature, the result of a warm temperament—guides to hell under the form of angels of light, conducting the unconscious victim of feelings that appear Divine and seraphic, into a state of heart and life at which the very world stands aghast. Cases of this kind came under my immediate cognizance, disgusted me, made me suspect feelings which I had hitherto cherished as the holiest, and produced a reaction. Nevertheless, the only true use of such a discovery is this, that our basest feelings lie very near to our highest, and that they pass into one another by insensible transitions. It is not true to take the tone so fearfully sounded in Tennyson's "Vision of Sin," or that of Mephistopheles when he sneeringly predicts to Faust the mode of termination for his "sublime intuition," after the soliloquy in the forest, when Gretchen's image has elevated his soul. The true lesson is to watch, suspect, and guard aspirations after good, not to drown them as spurious. Wordsworth says—

True dignity abides with him alone  
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,  
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,  
In lowliness of heart.

I feel the need of works of this kind, and I shall begin them again.<sup>1</sup>

(3) It is Jesus Christ Himself, and not His teaching or His work apart from His Person. His work, indeed, can be appreciated only in the light of His Person; His death is at best heroic self-devotion (if it be so much as that) unless His Person is superhuman. If Jesus is only man, or if His Person is left out of view, there is no more reason for reliance on His death than on the death of Socrates. His Sacraments are only picturesque unrealities, unless He who warranted their power lives and is mighty; apart from His Person, they have no more spiritual validity than an armorial bearing or a rosette. And His teaching cannot be represented as a "foundation" of Christian life, which may be substituted for His Person, and enable us to dispense with it, for the simple reason that the persistent drift of that teaching is directly and indirectly to centre thought, love, adoration upon Himself; as though in Him, as distinct from what He said and did, mankind was to find its true and lasting strength and peace.

¶ This is the secret of Christ's power over men. He does not come to discuss with them some empty conundrum, some wretched enigma, that challenges only the intellect; He sets Himself down in the heart, and trains that, brings that into the liberty of His blessed captivity, and out of the heart there comes His kingdom, which can never be moved.<sup>2</sup>

4. A comprehensive idea of Jesus Christ as the foundation may be found in the very old representation of Him as Prophet, Priest, and King.

(1) *Prophet*.—A Prophet is not merely one who foretells future events. That is but a small and, in some respects, an inferior part of the prophet's work. The generic idea of a prophet is one who speaks of God, who reveals the thoughts and proclaims the truth of God. And in this regard Jesus Christ is the Prophet of God, who infinitely transcends all others.

(2) *Priest*.—In former times the priest stood between the sinner and God, and offered sacrifice on account of his sins. The Lord Jesus, as the Son of God and the Son of Man, was fitted

<sup>1</sup> Robertson, in *Life and Letters of the Rev. F. W. Robertson*, 263.

<sup>2</sup> J. Parker.

to be the medium to stand between our sinful souls and the righteous God; and for sacrifice, He offered Himself without spot unto God. And "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world."

(3) *King*.—Christ is also our King. As such He claims our love, our loyal obedience, our grateful homage, and our reverent worship. Instead of obeying the maxims and customs of the world, instead of following our own inclinations, and the uncertain and fitful impulses of our own hearts, let us obey Him. Let His will be supreme.

¶ It is a vain thought to flee from the work that God appoints us, for the sake of finding a greater blessing to our own souls, as if we could choose for ourselves where we shall find the fulness of the Divine Presence, instead of seeking it where alone it is to be found, in loving obedience.<sup>1</sup>

Close gently, weary eyes,  
And let the closing day sing sweetly unto thee  
A song of rest, that so the coming day may be  
A glad surprise;  
Close, weary eyes.

Rest now, oh wayward heart!  
Rest in submission comes; then let the swaying trees,  
Bending, obedient, at each breath of God's light breeze  
Show thee thy part;  
Rest, wayward heart.

Peace, sweet peace, struggling soul!  
Waves, hills and stars will say, "Seek not to walk by sight.  
By faith take all thy stumbling steps, through day and night,  
In God's control."  
Peace, struggling soul.

## II.

### THE BUILDING.

1. Our attention is drawn to the materials used in the building rather than to the building itself. The materials are of two kinds—(1) "gold, silver, costly stones," that is, those that will

<sup>1</sup> Dinah Morris, in *Adam Berle*.



pass through fire unscathed; and (2) "wood, hay, stubble,"—materials which fire will consume. There is, therefore, good teaching and bad teaching. Good teaching is the showing forth of Christ Jesus in word and life.

¶ We are, perhaps, beginning to recognize the need of special training, but hundreds of clergymen can be found who would acknowledge that they never had any kind of education in the two branches of their work—teaching and preaching. A young clergyman recently, in conversation with me, deplored this. "I did not know how to teach, and I have been obliged to try and gain some knowledge of the art by listening to the teachers in the elementary schools." This is the example of a man wise enough to be aware of his deficiencies, and courageous enough to try and repair them. But here is a strange fact. Educated skill is demanded in some callings, and these not the most important; yet in some of the higher or more difficult callings educated skill is not demanded, and is not even deemed to be important. We do not allow our teeth to be pulled out except by a qualified practitioner, but we entrust grave moral responsibilities to untrained men. We require some evidence of practical skill from our cab-drivers, but we hand over the direction of vast national interests to men who have never learned even the rudiments of political and economic science. It is all very puzzling. It belongs to the noble faith of being able somehow to "muddle through." The wonder is, not that things are done so well considering how much is given into untrained hands, but that things are done at all.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. What is bad teaching?

(1) A man may interpret Scripture, and yet not bring Christ out of it. He may delight himself in the study; he may be skilful in comparing Scripture with Scripture; he may perceive with a marvellous insight the doctrinal contrasts and harmonies which fill the Bible; he may be wise in combining and reconciling where careless readers see only contradiction and confusion; he may attract listeners by the clearness of his exposition and the variety of his illustration; and yet in all this there may be no savour of Christ and no unction of the Spirit. Men may come and go, depart and return, week by week, where he ministers; they may find information, find instruction, but not find edification, because they find not Christ.

<sup>1</sup> W. Boyd Carpenter, *Some Pages of my Life*, 324.

(2) Again, a man may be a sincere Christian, and even in a sense preach Christ, and yet his work may be but as the wood or the stubble because in the Divine he has lost the human; because, in other words, though he knows theology, he knows not man, and, though he understands something of the glory of the Saviour, he is ignorant of the application of that Gospel to the hearts and lives of men. His doctrinal statements are correct and ample; he can discourse with feeling and beauty upon the great revelations of grace; but there is no connecting link, in his preaching, between heaven and earth, between truth and life, between the Saviour of sinners and the sinner whom He came to save. Therefore the Gospel which he enforces floats above his hearers in a region cloudy and inaccessible; they hear the sound thereof, but the voice they hear not; the revelation of Christ is become again in his hands as the letter which kills, rather than as the spirit which gives life.

(3) It may be that all the energies of a ministry have been turned upon controversy; that a congregation which came together to be fed with "the sincere milk of the word" that it "might grow thereby," has been occupied week by week and year after year with vehement declamation or laborious argument against some form of error, supposed to be the peril of the times, upon which the preacher would concentrate all the anxieties and all the efforts of souls given him to guide and lives entrusted to him to regulate.

¶ We naturally look to our symbolical documents—the Creeds, Catechisms, and other standards of our several Churches, for guidance as to what constitutes the main matter or substance of the Christian religion. But we find upon inspection that the subjects which those books treat of are neither those which are in themselves most necessary and important, nor those which our Lord and His Apostles chiefly insisted on; but they are for the most part the points disputed between different Churches—between Romanists and Protestants, between Calvinists and Arminians, and between Trinitarians and Unitarians. So that the books in question set forth the differences which exist among Christians, not their agreements. Now, as a general rule, their agreement is both far greater and far more momentous than their disagreement. I say the things they agree about are far more numerous, and far more essential, than the things they disagree about. These last have often swelled out into magnitude simply



by reason of the quarrels respecting them, as a barren island or a sandy waste has sometimes grown into a mighty matter by reason of the struggles of great nations respecting it. In itself it is worth little or nothing; it is great only because of the contest which is carried on.<sup>1</sup>

(4) There is a fourth case in which a fatal deadness has fallen upon a ministry in the very attempt to communicate to it a vigorous life. The preacher gives himself to the one aim of making his sermons lively. He counts nothing below the level of pulpit gravity; nothing too secular or too mundane to be made the starting-point of Sunday exhortation. He speaks of giving "a healthy tone to common life," and this, not by raising earth to heaven, but by bringing down the heavenly to the level of the earthly. He forgets that the Christian politician and the Christian student and the Christian man of business do not come together in the Lord's house to hear their own subjects discussed by one far less fitted to do so than themselves, but rather to be reminded of a subject higher and nobler than their own, a subject in which they may rest altogether from week-day toils and cares, and realize a loftier aim and a deeper unity in things unseen, things heavenly, things Divine.

¶ It is no part of my business to condemn this, that, and the other kind of teaching, but I will tell you what is evidently wood and hay and stubble. Misplaced learning; misplaced speculation; misplaced eloquence; sham philosophy; preaching one's self; talking about temporary, trivial things; dealing with the externals of Christianity, its ceremonial and its ritual; dealing with the morals of Christianity apart from that one motive of love to a dying Saviour which makes morality a reality in human life. All that kind of Christian teaching, remote from daily life and from men's deepest needs, however it may be admired, and thought to be "eloquent," "original," and "on a level with the growing culture of the age," and so on, is flimsy stuff to build upon the foundation of a crucified Saviour. There is no solidity in such work. It will not stand the stress of a gale of wind while it is being built, or keep out the weather for those who house in it; and it will blaze at last like a thatched roof when "that day" puts a match to it.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Robert Lee.

<sup>2</sup> A. Maclaren.

## III.

## THE FIRE.

1. The flame plays round both the buildings. What fire is it? The text answers the question for us—"the day shall declare it." The Apostle does not think that he needs to say what day. His readers know well enough what day he means. To him and to them there is one day so conspicuous and so often in their thoughts, that there is no need to name it more particularly. *The day is the day when Christ shall come.* And the fire is but the symbol that always attends the Divine appearance in the Old and in the New Testament.

¶ Many of us who live in London have at some time watched that awful but fascinating sight, the progress of a great fire; we have marked how the devouring element masters first one and then another department of the building which is its victim; but especially we have noted what it consumes and what it is forced to spare, the resistless force with which it sweeps through and shrivels up all slighter materials, and pauses only before the solid barriers of stone or iron, thus trying, before our eyes, the builder's work of what sort it is.<sup>1</sup>

I felt begin  
The Judgment-Day: to retrocede  
Was too late now. "In very deed,"  
(I uttered to myself) "that Day!"  
The intuition burned away  
All darkness from my spirit too:  
There stood I, found and fixed, I knew,  
*Choosing the world.* The choice was made;  
And naked and disguiseless stayed,  
And unevadable, the fact.<sup>2</sup>

2. But He who at the end will judge us once for all, is now and always judging us; and His perpetual presence as the Judge who is constantly probing and sifting us is revealed by events and circumstances which have on our souls the effect of fire—they burn up what is frivolous and worthless, and they leave what is solid unscathed. There are many events and situations which act upon us as fire; it will be enough to consider one or two of them.

<sup>1</sup> H. P. Liddon.

<sup>2</sup> Browning, *Easter-Day*.

(1) There is the searching, testing power of a responsible and new position, of a situation forcing its occupant to make a critical choice, or to withstand a strong pressure. Such a new position discovers and burns up all that is weak in a man's faith or character. In quiet times there is nothing to extort the discovery; but when a great effort of action or of resistance becomes necessary, it is soon seen what will and what will not stand the test. All that looks like a hold on solid principle, and is in reality only fancy, or sentiment, or speculation, is then seen to be unserviceable; and if a man's religious mind is composed mainly of such material, a catastrophe is inevitable.

¶ Take the Pope in Browning's *The Ring and the Book*. The aged man, on the verge of the grave, has the responsibility laid upon him of deciding the fate of Count Guido. He holds the balance between life and death.

In God's name! Once more on this earth of God's,  
While twilight lasts and time wherein to work,  
I take His staff with my uncertain hand,  
And stay my six and fourscore years, my due  
Labour and sorrow, on His judgment-seat,  
And forthwith think, speak, act, in place of Him—  
The Pope for Christ. Once more appeal is made  
From man's assize to mine: I sit and see  
Another poor weak trembling human wretch  
Pushed by his fellows, who pretend the right,  
Up to the gulf which, where I gaze, begins  
From this world to the next—gives way and way,  
Just on the edge over the awful dark:  
With nothing to arrest him but my feet.

And I am bound, the solitary judge,  
To weigh the worth, decide upon the plea,  
And either hold a hand out, or withdraw  
A foot and let the wretch drift to the fall.  
Ay, and while thus I dally, dare perchance  
Put fancies for a comfort 'twixt this calm  
And yonder passion that I have to bear,—  
As if reprieve were possible for both  
Prisoner and Pope—how easy were reprieve!

He weighs all the evidence, the reasons which might be urged in the name of mercy for flinching from the solemn decision.

*Quis pro Domino?*

"Who is upon the Lord's side?" asked the Count.  
I, who write—

And he signs the death-warrant.

For I may die this very night  
And how should I dare die, this man let live?

(2) Sometimes men surprise us, when placed in a difficult position, by the sudden exhibition of qualities for which no one before had given them credit; the apparently thoughtless show foresight, and the timid courage, and the selfish disinterestedness; and the irresolute perseverance, of which there had been no evidence whatever. The quiet school-boy in an Italian village, whom his playmates name the "dumb ox," becomes, almost in spite of himself, the first of the scholars, one of the few greatest thinkers in the world. The officer who has been distinguished for nothing but a punctual regard to duty is suddenly placed in a position to show that he has almost the genius and courage sufficient to roll back the course of history, and to save a falling empire from ruin. The youth whose life has been passed amidst scenes of frivolity, or perhaps of licentiousness, hears one day an appeal to his conscience, his sense of duty, his sense of failure, and wakes from a dream of sensual lethargy to show the world that he has in him the making of a man, aye, the making of a saint.

¶ The sense of power which comes from self-development can only be fruitful for good if it be directed by the profound sense of responsibility, which the perpetual consciousness of life as lived in God's sight alone can give.<sup>1</sup>

(3) But the Greeks had a stern proverb to the effect that a position of leadership shows what a man is. The real drift of the saying was that in practice it too often shows what he is not. It implies that too generally the discovery would be unfavourable; that the test of high office would, in a majority of cases, bring to light something weak or rotten in the character, which in private life might have escaped detection. History is strewn with illustrations of this truth; the virtuous though weak Emperor,

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters of Mandell Creighton*, i. 185.

who was floated to power on the surf of a revolution, is by no means the only man of whom it might be written that all men would have judged him capable of ruling others, had he only never been a ruler. How often does manhood open with so much that seems promising—intelligence, courage, attention to duty, good feeling, unselfishness, all that looks like high principle—and then a man is put into a position of authority. It is the fire which tests the work he has done in his character. Suddenly he betrays some one defect which ruins everything. It may be vanity; it may be envy; it may be untruthfulness; it may be some lower passion which emerges suddenly, and as if unbidden, from the depths of the soul, and gains over him a fatal mastery. All his good is turned to ill, all is distorted, discoloured; he might have died as a young man, amid general lamentations that so promising a life had been cut short. He does die, as did Nero or Henry VIII., amidst the loudly expressed or muttered thanksgiving of his generation that he has left the world. The fact was, that the position in which he found himself exposed him to a pressure which his character could not bear.

¶ After the Council the King [George IV.] called me and talked to me about racehorses, which he cares more about than the welfare of Ireland or the peace of Europe.<sup>1</sup>

¶ You remember how the old Tay bridge, before that fatal winter night, was believed to be equal to its purpose; no one of us who had travelled by it high in the air, over what was practically an arm of the sea, thought that it could but do its work for many long years to come, in all winds and weathers. It needed, no doubt, a mighty impact, a terrific rush of wind from a particular quarter, to show that the genius and audacity of man had presumed too largely on the forbearance of the elements; but—the moment came. We, many of us, remember something of the sense of horror which that tragic catastrophe left on the public mind—the gradual disappearance of the last train, as it moved along its wonted way into the darkness, the suddenly observed dislocation and flickering of the distant lights, the faint sound as of a crash, rising for a moment above the din of the storm, and then the utter darkness, as all—train and bridge together sank into the gulf of waters beneath, and one moment of supreme agony was followed by the silence of death.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Greville Memoirs*, i. 144.

<sup>2</sup> H. P. Liddon, 59.

Not alone in pain and gloom  
Does the abhorrèd tempter come;  
Not in light alone and pleasure  
Proffers he the poisoned measure.  
When the soul doth rise  
Nearest to its native skies,  
There the exalted spirit finds,  
Borne upon the heavenly winds,  
Satan, in an angel's guise,  
With voice divine and innocent eyes.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Richard Watson Gilder.

YET POSSESSING ALL THINGS.



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## YET POSSESSING ALL THINGS.

All things are yours ; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours ; and ye are Christ's ; and Christ is God's.—1 Cor. iii. 21-23.

1. THE Corinthian Christians seem to have carried into the Church some of the worst vices of Greek political life. They were split up into wrangling factions, each swearing by the name of some person. Paul was the battle-cry of one set ; Apollos of another. Paul and Apollos were very good friends, their admirers bitter foes—according to a very common experience. The springs lie close together up in the hills, the rivers may be parted by half a continent.

These feuds were all the more detestable to the Apostle because his name was dragged into them ; and so, in the first part of this letter, he sets himself, with all his might, to shame and to argue the Corinthian Christians out of their wrangling. This great text is one of the considerations which he adduces with that purpose. In effect he says, " To pin your faith to any one teacher is a wilful narrowing of the sources of your blessing and your wisdom. You say you are Paul's men. Has Apollos got nothing that he could teach you ? and may you not get any good out of brave brother Cephas ? Take them all ; they were all meant for your good. Let no man glory in individuals."

That is all that his argument required him to say. But in his impetuous way he goes on into regions far beyond. His thought, like some swiftly revolving wheel, catches fire of its own rapid motion ; and he blazes up into this triumphant enumeration of all the things that serve the soul which serves Jesus Christ. " You are lords of men, of the world, of time, of death, of eternity ; but you are not lords of yourselves. You belong to Jesus, and in the measure in which you belong to Him do all things belong to you."

2. There is a fine wholesome exultation about the words, considering from whom they come and to whom they were addressed. We do not like to hear a rich man boasting of his wealth; but when a poor man tells us how rich he feels, that seems wholesome, and it gives us a glimpse into the deeper fact of what being "well off" really is. And that is what we have in this word of St. Paul's to his Corinthian converts. Poor men they were, every one of them, with little enough of this world's gear. What different ways of looking at things there are! If we could have gone to any one of the great merchants at Corinth, and asked him about the standing of the score or two of men who were beginning to be known as the followers of the new religion there, his answer would probably have been something like this: "Standing, my dear sir? They have not any! Why, there is hardly a man among them worth his fifty ounces of silver. You might buy up the whole lot of them for five talents of gold. The only man among them who has anything is that sailmaker, Agrippa, and he was almost ruined by having to break up and leave Rome on that edict of the emperor, expelling the Jews." That was one way of looking at them. St. Paul looks at them differently. "You have everything," he says. "I am yours, and Apollos is yours, and so is Cephas. And this world is yours, and the next world is yours, things present and things to come—'all things are yours.'" It was a right royal setting forth of their position, if they could only feel it so. And they did feel it so in the main. Take that early Christian life as a whole; there is very little whining in it, very little about their poverty, or difficulties, or hardships. They rise up before us—St. Paul and his fellows, and those humble, nameless folk who gathered round them—they rise up before us out of the shadows of the past, not as weary and sorrow-laden men, treading painfully along, but as soldiers marching with firm ringing steps, and singing songs of triumph as they go.<sup>1</sup>

3. "*All things are yours*," says St. Paul, and he goes on with an enumeration which has been called, not without reason, "the inventory of the possessions of the child of God," and in which death itself figures. He sums up his enumeration by reproducing

<sup>1</sup> B. Herford, *Courage and Cheer*, 235.

the bold paradox with which he had begun, "Yea, I tell you, *all are yours.*" Then he adds the ground or basis of this possession. "Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." "All things are yours," he says, "but ye are not your own, ye are Christ's, and it is because ye belong to Christ and depend on Him that all things belong to you."

## I.

## ALL THINGS ARE YOURS.

There are days in the year when merchants take account of their stock. It is well sometimes for a Christian disciple likewise to stop and take an inventory of his possessions. The Apostle Paul here gives us such an inventory. "All things are yours." There cannot be anything left when you have said "All things." That is an expression which sweeps round the whole universe and takes in everything. "All things are yours." And now the thought strikes the Apostle's mind, "They will hardly understand how much that includes, unless I begin to specify," and so he adds: "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas," representing all that ministered in word and doctrine; but that is only one department of this great possession. "Or the world." "The world" is one of the most universal terms of which we have any knowledge. It includes the whole human family; it includes the whole of human history; it includes the whole of the habitable earth. Yet even that will not do. "Or life." That covers the term of our existence both in this world and in the hereafter; it is all yours with all its experiences. "Or death." If there is anything that seems to have both "all seasons" and all men for its own, it is death. "Things present"; these include whatsoever is and whatsoever has been, because whatsoever has been belongs to the present as the property of memory, just as whatsoever is belongs to the present as the property of actual daily experience. But all this will not suffice. "And things to come." That reaches into the illimitable ages of eternity. St. Paul has been trying to make specifications, to give the items in this stocktaking. But, as though discouraged with the attempt to enumerate, he has only succeeded in giving a very few of the things possessed by the disciple, but those are the most comprehensive terms possible. And—like a man who has begun taking stock in a

great manufactory, and has noted five or six great articles that one shelf contains, but, as he sees the vast accumulation of goods before him, gives up in despair in the effort to complete his work—St. Paul returns to the original sentence with which he began: “All things are yours.”

What does this statement of the Apostle mean?

1. It is worth our while first to recall something of what it does not mean. It does not mean licence, the parody and libel of liberty. It does not mean selfishness, the mind which grasps or which withholds at the dictate of self-will; this is not possession, but theft; this in its effect is nothing but the hard bondage and poverty of the being. It does not mean the faintest shadow of a slur over moral distinctions—the bad dream that you can be so spiritual as to be, even for one fraction of a moment, emancipated from conscience; the lying whisper that you shall not surely die of permitted sin, because Christ died for you.

2. It does not mean a relaxation of the Divine rule of self-sacrifice. It is not spoken in order to throw the halo of the Gospel over a life which, professing godliness, is yet secretly, perhaps almost unconsciously, making itself as comfortable as possible for its own sake. It is not spoken to help us to minimize the call to bear the cross, and to serve the Lord in others, while we multiply and magnify excuses for indulgences and enjoyments which, however cultivated and refined, terminate in ourselves. The words are not given us to insinuate that, if we will but say “Lord, Lord,” with a certain fervour, we may live as those who think that a man’s “life” does “consist in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”

3. But then, most certainly, the words have a meaning, positive and beautiful—“All things are yours.” They are spoken indeed to those, and to those only, who are not their own but their Lord’s possession; but they do not merely restate that side of truth. They give its contrast and its complement; they turn the shield quite round, to show its other face—and it is another. “You are not your own”; be sure of that, it is an immovable fact. “All things are yours”; be sure of that also; it is meant to carry to you a magnificent message, affirmative, distinctive,

altogether its own. Now as then, now and for ever, the man who belongs to Christ in truth is "a child of God." And his Father will do anything for him. Nothing of his Father's resources shall be grudged to him. Wisdom and love may, and will, sort and sift, and in that sense limit, the things which shall be put actually into the child's hands. But the whole wealth of the great home is his, in the sense that he is the child for whom anything shall be done, on whom no resources are too great to spend. His utmost good is watched for, always and everywhere. His Father delights exceedingly to meet his wishes, and limits the meeting of them only by the interests of the child; and He has made those interests identical with His own.

¶ Adolphe Monod, great saint, great teacher, great sufferer, lying on a premature couch of anguish and death at Paris, collected in his bedchamber, Sunday by Sunday, a little congregation of friends; Guizot was sometimes of the number. There he addressed them, like Standfast in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, as from the very waters of the last river, speaking always on his life-long theme, Jesus Christ. The pathetic series of these *Adieux à ses Amis et à l'Église* was gathered after his death into a volume. Late in its pages comes a discourse with the title 'All in Jesus Christ.' From this let me quote a few sentences: "Be it wisdom, be it light, be it power, be it victory over sin, be it a matter of this world, or of the world to come, all is in Christ. Having Christ, we have all things; bereft of Christ, we have absolutely nothing. All things are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Well, then, what is the result for me? I am poor, it may be. Yet all the fortunes of this world are mine; for they are Christ's, who Himself is God's, and who could easily give them all to me, with Himself, if they would serve my interests. The whole world, with all its glories, with all its power, belongs to me; for it belongs to my Father, who will give it me to-morrow, and could give it me to-day, if that were good for me. I am very ill, it may be. Yet health is mine, strength is mine, comfort is mine, a perfect enjoyment of all the blessings of life is mine; for all this belongs to Christ, who belongs to God, and who disposes of it as He will. If He withholds these things from me to-day, for a fleeting moment, swift as the shuttle in the loom, it is for reasons wholly of His own; it is because these pains and this bitterness conceal a benediction worth more to me than the health so precious, than the comfort so delightful. . . . I challenge you to find a thing of which I cannot say: This is my Father's; therefore it is mine; if He withholds it to-day, He will



give it me to-morrow. I trust myself to His love. All is mine, if I am His." <sup>1</sup>

¶ A distinguished American politician in a heated campaign is said to have telegraphed to his friends: "Claim everything." That, in a much profounder sense, is precisely the summons which Christianity makes on life. . . . All things are yours. The whole of life is holy. Religion is not a province but an empire. It comprehends both the church and the world, both life and death, both the present and the future. The world is one, and all of it is sacred, and it is all yours, if ye are Christ's, as Christ is God's. <sup>2</sup>

¶ Amidst all my hurry, however, I had five minutes alone by my little Lena's grave. The beautiful white coral was blackened, but the grass and shrubs had grown, and the lemon branches with their bright fruit were bending over and shading it beautifully. How naturally one looks *up* to the blue sky above, and wonders where the spirit is, or if she can see the mourning hearts below. She would have been running on her own little feet now, had she been on Earth; but though my heart aches for her still, I would not have it otherwise, for she was not sent in vain, and oh, what a little *teacher* she has been! When John took Dr. Steele to see the grave, he said: "You have thus taken possession"; and I felt we had taken possession of more through her than that little spot of ground on Aniwa. <sup>3</sup>

O wealth of life beyond all bound!  
 Eternity each moment given!  
 What plummet may the Present sound?  
 Who promises a *future* heaven?  
     Or glad, or grieved,  
     Oppressed, relieved,  
 In blackest night, or brightest day  
     Still pours the flood  
     Of golden good,  
 And more than heartfull fills me aye.

My wealth is common; I possess  
 No petty province, but the whole  
 What's mine alone is mine far less  
 Than treasure shared by every soul.  
     Talk not of store,  
     Millions or more—

<sup>1</sup> H. C. G. Moule, *The Secret of the Presence*, 56

<sup>2</sup> Peabody, *Mornings in the College Chapel*, ii. 231.

<sup>3</sup> John G. Paton, ii. 296.



Of values which the purse may hold—  
     But this divine!  
     I own the mine  
 Whose grains outweigh a planet's gold.

I have a stake in every star,  
     In every beam that fills the day;  
 All hearts of men my coffers are,  
     My ores arterial tides convey;  
     The fields, the skies,  
     The sweet replies  
 Of thought to thought are my gold-dust;  
     The oaks; the brooks,  
     And speaking looks  
 Of lovers, faith and friendship's trust.

Life's youngest tides joy-brimming flow  
     For him who lives above all years,  
 Who all-immortal makes the Now,  
     And is not ta'en in Time's arrears:  
     His life's a hymn  
     The seraphim  
 Might hark to hear or help to sing,  
     And to his soul  
     The boundless whole  
 Its bounty all doth daily bring.

"All Mine is thine," the Sky-Soul saith;  
     "The wealth I Am must thou become;  
 Richer and richer, breath by breath—  
     Immortal gain, immortal room!"  
     And since all His  
     Mine also is,  
 Life's gift outruns my fancies far,  
     And drowns the dream  
     In larger stream,  
 As morning drinks the morning-star.<sup>1</sup>

**1. Paul, Apollos, Cephas.**

1. Each of these names stands for a distinct species of teaching—the argumentative, the eloquent, the hortatory. Let us not pass any of them by; from those with whom we have least sympathy, we may glean something. Each disciple brings some

<sup>1</sup> David Atwood Wasson.

bits of bread and fish. Each stone flashes some colour needed by the prism to effect the beam of perfect light. Each flower may furnish some ingredient for the common store of honey.

2. Not in vain have martyrs suffered, and fathers taught, and saints prayed, and philanthropists laboured, and reformers preached. All these too are ours. It is ours to note the martyr Ignatius weighed down with years but undaunted in heart, with a spirit soaring higher than the courage of a hero and bowing lower than the humility of a child, not daring yet to count himself a disciple, but setting his face stedfastly towards the Roman amphitheatre, thirsting to become food for the wild beasts, that haply while finding them he might also find Christ. It is ours to observe the kingly spirit of Athanasius, who through nearly half a century, resolute and unswerving, defied obloquy and persecution, maintaining with no less clearness of vision than stedfastness of purpose the faith of Christ alone against the world. It is ours also to take to heart the example of Francis of Assisi, the most gentle and loving of saints, who delighted to claim kindred with all the works of creation and all the dispensations of providence, as the sons and daughters of the one beneficent Father, greeting even fire as a brother and death as a sister; who preached to a literal age in the only language which that age could understand, by a literal obedience to the precept of Christ, and went out into the world taking with him absolutely nothing, casting in his lot with the poor whom men despised, and the leper whom they abhorred! So we may go on through all the ages, feeding the fires that are within us with the fuel of these bright examples of Christian faith and heroism and love. And we shall do this without fear. We shall use these examples without abusing them. We shall not say, I am of Martin Luther, or I am of Francis Xavier, or I am of John Wesley; for Luther and Xavier and Wesley are all ours. Brilliant though their lives may have been, they are after all only broken lights of Him who is the full and perfect light.

3. Not only are all Christian teachers ours to serve us after their own kind, but the whole world of men is ours to do the same. If there is a man anywhere with a thought in his mind worth having, whether he be a historian, or a poet, or a romancer; if there is a man anywhere who has a practical idea to communicate,

whether he be a statesman, or a political economist, or a sanitarian; if there is a man anywhere who knows something valuable about the earth or the heavens, we should listen to that man with all gratitude. For the whole world of such men is ours—men of thought, men of imagination, men of inventive genius men of character; all are ours, and we should not despise any one of them. They have all their place in the economy of human nature. We should not favour the historian and neglect the poet, or welcome the scientist and spurn the romancer; we should look upon each as a valuable servant ready to render us a service peculiar to himself.

¶ Literature may almost be called the last stronghold of paganism for the cultivated classes all over the Empire. It is hard for us to sympathize with the feelings of Christians in the fifth century for whom cultivated paganism was a living reality possessed of a seductive power; who could not separate classical literature from the religious atmosphere in which it had been produced; and who regarded the masterpieces of the Augustan age as beautiful horrors from which they might hardly escape. Jerome had fears for his soul's salvation because he could not conquer his admiration for Cicero's Latin prose, and Augustine shrank within himself when he thought on his love for the poems of Vergil. Had not his classical tastes driven him in youth from the uncouth latinity of the copies of the Holy Scriptures when he tried to read them? Christianity had mastered their heart, mind and conscience, but it could not stifle fond recollection nor tame the imagination.<sup>1</sup>

## ii. The World.

By "the world" St. Paul here means the existing order of material things, the world we live in, the physical universe. "The world," he says, "is yours." The world, the cosmos, the Divine order of the created universe, with all its intricate harmonies and all its manifold glories, is ours. Our Lord is not only the Head of the Church, the spiritual creation; He is also the Centre of the Universe, the material creation. This He is, as the Eternal Word of God by whom all things came into being, in whom they are sustained, through whom they are governed. In our modern theology we almost wholly lose sight of this aspect of Christ's Person; and the loss to ourselves is inestimable.

<sup>1</sup> *Cambridge Medieval History*, i. 115.

Science and religion, in the Apostle's teaching, have their meeting-point in Christ. There is no antagonism between them; they are the twofold expression of the same Divine energy. And therefore science, not less than theology, is the inheritance of the Christian. It is ours to roam through the boundless realms of space with the astronomer, and to plunge into the countless ages of the past with the geologist: ours to enter into the vast laboratory of nature, and to analyse her subtle processes and record her manifold results. It will be no intrusion into an alien sphere. It is a right which we can claim as Christians. It is ours because we are Christ's.

¶ This is our school, hung with maps and diagrams and simple lessons. There is not a single flower, not a distant star, not a murmuring brooklet, not a sound sweet or shrill; there is not a living creature, or a natural process, that may not serve us; not only by meeting some appetite of sense, but by teaching us such deep lessons as those which Jesus drew from the scenes around Him, saying, "the kingdom of heaven is like."<sup>1</sup>

1. That man owns the world who remains its master. There are rich men who say they possess so many thousand pounds. Turn the sentence about and it would be a great deal truer—the thousands of pounds possess them. They are the slaves of their own possessions, and every man who counts any material thing as indispensable to his well-being, and regards it as the chiefest good, is the slave-servant of that thing.

¶ My friends, do you remember that old Scythian custom, when the head of a house died? How he was dressed in his finest dress, and set in his chariot, and carried about to his friends' houses; and each of them placed him at his table's head, and all feasted in his presence? Suppose it were offered to you in plain words, as it *is* offered to you in dire facts, that you should gain this Scythian honour, gradually, while you yet thought yourself alive. Suppose the offer were this: You shall die slowly; your blood shall daily grow cold, your flesh petrify, your heart beat at last only as a rusted group of iron valves. Your life shall fade from you, and sink through the earth into the ice of Caina; but, day by day, your body shall be dressed more gaily, and set in higher chariots, and have more orders on its breast—crowns on its head, if you will. Men shall bow before

<sup>1</sup> F. B. Meyer.

it, stare and shout round it, crowd after it up and down the streets; build palaces for it, feast with it at their tables' heads all the night long; your soul shall stay enough within it to know what they do, and feel the weight of the golden dress on its shoulders, and the furrow of the crown-edge on the skull;—no more. Would you take the offer, verbally made by the death-angel? Would the meanest among us take it, think you? Yet practically and verily we grasp at it, every one of us, in a measure; many of us grasp at it in its fulness of horror. Every man accepts it, who desires to advance in life without knowing what life is; who means only that he is to get more horses, and more footmen, and more fortune, and more public honour, and—not more personal soul. He only is advancing in life, whose heart is getting softer, whose blood warmer, whose brain quicker, whose spirit is entering into living peace. And the men who have this life in them are the true lords or kings of the earth—they, and they only.<sup>1</sup>

¶ We shall never learn from our Lord to look with an unloving and cynical eye upon the common sights and ordinary ways of nature and of men. Who, if not He, has enabled us to read Divine philosophy in the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, in the transactions of the market, in the work of the farm, in the casting of a net, and the sweeping of a room? Where, if not in His school, have we been taught that it was a good God who made the world, and sent us into it, not to withdraw ourselves from it, not to feel scorn for it, but to study it, toil in it, and help one another to profit by our stay in it? Are they not His lessons which have redeemed the life of the peasant from dulness, as they have deepened the insight of the artist, and strengthened the heart of the philanthropist? It is inconceivable, wholly inconceivable, that He who lived and taught thus, could have meant us to understand that His truest followers were to be those who should pass through this earthly life unoccupied, uninterested, unstirred spectators, unfriendly critics, or active foes of its development and progress.<sup>2</sup>

2. He owns the world who turns it to the highest use of spiritual nourishment. All material things are given, and were created, for the growth of men; or at all events their highest purpose is that men should, by them, grow. And therefore, as the scaffolding is swept away when the building is finished, so

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (*Works*, xviii. 99).

<sup>2</sup> A. W. Robinson, *The Voice of Joy and Health*, 109.



God will sweep away this material universe, with all its wonders of beauty and of contrivance, when men have grown by means of it. The material is less than the soul, and he is master of the world, and owns it, who has got thoughts out of it, truth out of it, impulses out of it, visions of God out of it, who has by it been led nearer to his Divine Master. If I look out upon a fair landscape, and the man who draws the rents of it is standing by my side, and I draw more sweetness, and deeper impulses, and larger and loftier thoughts out of it than he does, it belongs to me far more than it does to him.

¶ Hazlitt, relating in one of his essays how he went on foot from one great man's house to another's in search of works of art, begins suddenly to triumph over these noble and wealthy owners, because he was more capable of enjoying their costly possessions than they were; because they had paid the money and he had received the pleasure. And the occasion is a fair one for self-complacency. While the one man was working to be able to buy the picture, the other was working to be able to enjoy the picture. An inherited aptitude will have been diligently improved in either case; only the one man has made for himself a fortune, and the other has made for himself a living spirit. It is a fair occasion for self-complacency, I repeat, when the event shows a man to have chosen the better part, and laid out his life more wisely, in the long-run, than those who have credit for most wisdom.<sup>1</sup>

¶ Read that touching book, *The Story of a Scotch Naturalist*; or the life of Hugh Miller—only a workman in the Cromarty stone quarries, yet to whom that "Old Red Sandstone" belonged more than ever it did to the men for whom he worked. Or think of Thoreau, one of that little group, with Emerson at their head, who made Concord famous—Thoreau, in his little shanty in the Walden woods, cultivating just enough for life's barest needs, and meanwhile making the wisdom and beauty of Nature and of books and men his own; loving everything around him and loved by all—the birds perching upon him as he hoed his garden, the squirrels nestling up to him as he sat reading in his woodland nooks; taking all that country-side into his mind and heart, and making it curiously his own. So that to-day, as people drive by it, they say "that is Thoreau's wood"!<sup>2</sup>

### 3. He owns the world who uses it as the arena, or wrestling

<sup>1</sup> R. L. Stevenson, *Ordered South*.

<sup>2</sup> B. Herford.



ground, on which, by labour, he may gain strength, and in which he may do service. Antagonism helps to develop muscle, and the best use of the outward frame of things is that we shall take it as the field upon which we can serve God.

First, then, behold the world as thine, and well

Note that where thou dost dwell :

See all the beauty of the spacious case ;

Lift up thy pleased and ravisht eyes ;

Admire the glory of this Heavenly place,

And all its blessings prize.

That sight well seen thy spirit shall prepare

To make all other things more rare.

Men's woes shall be but foils unto thy bliss :

Thou once enjoying this :

Trades shall adorn and beautify the earth ;

Their ignorance shall make thee bright :

Were not their griefs Democritus's mirth ?

Their slips shall keep thee right ;

All shall be thine advantage ; all conspire

To make thy bliss and virtue higher.<sup>1</sup>

### iii. Life, Death.

Of the powers acting in the world there are two, of formidable and mysterious greatness, which seem to decide the course of the universe—*life* and *death*. The first comprehends all phenomena which are characterized by force, health, productiveness ; the second, all those which betray weakness, sickness, decay. From the one or the other of these two forces proceed all the hostile influences of which the believer feels himself the object. But he knows also that he is not their puppet ; for it is Christ his Lord who guides and tempers their action.

1. "*Life* is yours." Life is a very inclusive term. Think of the vastness of its meaning. It means here, as always, more than existence. Life has its dimensions : length and breadth, and depth and height. It is not enough to count the years that you live if you would measure your life. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten." That is simply a line from the cradle to the grave, reaching over seventy years of length.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Traherne.

A man may broaden out his life by broadening out his sympathy, his love, by taking into the embrace of his thought and his affection things that are outside the narrow line of self-interest. As he thinks of his neighbour; of a dying world; of the destitute and the widowed and the orphan and the oppressed; as he thinks of the Kingdom of God in all its vast out-reachings, the little narrow line of self-interest is crossed, and the territory of life broadens out to cover a vast continent of affection and of thought. When a man begins to cultivate his own nature, when he goes down into the depths of his own soul to find out what is there of sin, and by the grace of God expel it; what is there of weakness, and by the grace of God strengthen it; and what is there of selfishness, and by the grace of God displace it; when he learns, like a man who occupies uncultivated land on a farm, to plough it up, and subsoil it, and enrich the ground, so that he may yet get out of his own being the utmost possible yield for himself and his family and humanity—that man is discovering the depth that is possible to life. And when he looks beyond the present and the transient and the temporal, when he casts his eyes upward to God, when he reaches up after God, His likeness, His honour, His glory, then he is learning the height that is possible to life.

How is this abundant life ours?

(1) The world of human life is most his who knows it best, and loves it best. How shall we appropriate this world of man to ourselves and make it ours? The common idea has been to get some kind of lordship or kingship or mastership over it, or over as much of it as we can. In the old feudal times, the vassal used to kneel at the feet of the lord of the manor and swear to be "his man." But that is a poor notion. Let us go forth into the busy world and love it; interest ourselves in its life; mingle kindly with its joys and sorrows; try what we can do for men rather than what we can make them do for us, and we shall know what it is to have men ours, better than if we were their king or master. If we look through history, whose, most of all, is the world? Not Alexander's or Napoleon's, but Christ's, who made men His because He knew them and loved them. He whom we bind to ourselves by love becomes, as far as it is possible, ours.

A friendship is more truly a possession than a slave. Shakespeare's plays become ours not by our owning a handsome copy of them, but by our knowing them and loving them. Beethoven and Mendelssohn are theirs who love and understand them. So true is this, that Ruskin has pleaded that in works of art it is wrong to claim any private property or ownership. Such things belong to humanity. Would we allow that any money purchase could give a man any real right to make a bonfire of Raphael's pictures or to break up the Laocoon into paperweights? So of character and the deep qualities of life itself. We cannot buy these things; we cannot pay a master even to teach us goodness, or uprightness, or purity. This does not mean that the teacher can do nothing—*knowing* here too goes for something, but it is *loving* that does infinitely the most. The quality we love becomes a part of us. Our friend's nobleness, if that is what we really love in him, gives us also some touch of nobleness. We may never have much opportunity for heroism; but if, as we read of some brave, heroic deed, our heart throbs with deep loving admiration, that love by subtle chemistry transmutes the deed into our character; not the whole of it, but some touch of it, becomes a part of what we are.

(2) Life in its pleasures is ours; there is no bright or helpful pleasure that is not ours. There is no place on earth which a Christian man cannot transform and transfigure to be the very gateway of heaven. All mirth is ours, all laughter is ours, all amusements are ours. Amusement in our hands will turn to spiritual help, and to the making of manhood and womanhood. All music is ours, all poetry is ours, the drama is ours. Pleasure in its noblest, best, sweetest, truest sense belongs only to the Christian. It is only when we are really armed in Christ for the shocks and storms of life that we are safe to remember that we are made fit in Christ for a double enjoyment of its joys.

¶ Life is really so wondrous; this fibrine, iron, sinew, bone, flesh, and colouring substance is so miraculous when alive, walking about and thinking, and the eye is so expressive, the tone so eloquent, the brain so active, and the heart so full of love and feeling, that the mere gift of life is a largess so grand and utterly magnificent that the dry bones breathed on should indeed rejoice. Man is king of the world, monarch of the air, which is his circumambient servant and puts colour in his cheeks and brightness in

his eye; of the earth, which on her brown bosom bears him corn and wine and oil of gladness; of the sea, which scatters its treasures at his feet and conveys him from land to land; of the sky, which is peopled with winged servants of his; of the caverns and hollows under the earth, which yield iron and copper and lead and gold to serve him, and give him precious stones to glitter in his sight, and the treasures of antediluvian woods, laid up as coal to warm him in the winter. Of the other inferior life that shares the earth he too is master. Yoked to his chariot the swift steed bears him; and all animals, from the lion to the lamb, minister to his recreations, sports, desires, or wants.<sup>1</sup>

(3) Life in its disciplines is ours. To say that life is pleasurable is also to say that life is sad. To say that life is full of beauty is also to say that life is full of sorrow. There are minor as well as major chords in our life. There are none of us without our struggles, none of us without our failures, none of us without disappointments, none of us without bereavements, none without our sorrows. The old theologians and prophets used to look upon life as a probation. Life is not a probation; life is something nobler than that, it is an education. If we struggle, if we fight, if we are foiled, if we are down, let us not call it our sad destiny—let us call it God's educating force to make us perfect men or women in Christ Jesus.

Blaspheme not thou thy sacred Life, nor turn,  
O'er joys that God hath for a season lent—  
(Perchance to try thy spirit and its bent,  
Effeminate soul and base!)—weakly to mourn!  
There lies no desert in the land of Life;  
For e'en that tract that barrenest doth seem,  
Labour'd of thee in faith and hope, shall teem  
With heavenly harvests and rich gatherings rife.<sup>2</sup>

(4) Life in its possibilities is ours. John Stuart Mill once said that no man could think of the heights of feeling that were possible to him. Do we not believe that; do we not believe with all the future before us, and with all the love of God on our side, there are scarcely any stages which we cannot reach? There are heights of purity to climb, valleys of humility to go through, all the magnificent possibilities of service, of self-sacrifice, and of life for others, a new start, and prospects which the grace of God

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Friswell, *This Wicked World*, 269.

<sup>2</sup> Frances Kemble.

alone can give. When we look back upon our life, the saddest thing is not that we have been dishonest, not that we have been impure, perhaps; but the saddest thing is that our life has been so meagre when it might have been so grand, that it has been so petty when it might have been so sublime, so poor when it might have been so rich.

¶ From the first Christianity had proclaimed that the *whole* life of man belonged to it. This meant everything that made man's life wider, deeper, fuller; whatever made it more joyous or contented; whatever sharpened the brain, strengthened and taught the muscles, gave full play to man's energies, could be taken up into and become part of the Christian life. Sin and foulness were sternly excluded; but, that done, there was no element of the Græco-Roman civilization which could not be appropriated by Christianity. So it assimilated Hellenism or the fine flower and fruit of Greek thought and feeling; it appropriated Roman law and institutions; it made its own the simple festivals of the common people. All were theirs; and they were Christ's; and Christ was God's.<sup>1</sup>

Thank God for life: life is not sweet always,  
Hands may be heavy-laden, hearts care full,  
Unwelcome nights follow unwelcome days,  
And dreams divine end in awakenings dull.  
Still it is life, and life is cause for praise,  
This ache, this restlessness, this quickening sting,  
Prove me no torpid and inanimate thing,  
Prove me of Him who is of life the Spring,  
I am alive!—and that is beautiful.<sup>2</sup>

2. "*Death is yours.*" We had forgotten that; or we had not realized it. We had thought that we belonged to death, not death to us. We knew that we had some feeble hold upon life, but death was not thought to be a possession, desirable or undesirable. We had not added that to the catalogue of our wealth. We had never reckoned it among our treasures—among our resources. We had not realized that death is one of our opportunities.

¶ The writers of the Epistles make little or nothing of physical death. They bear two great points in mind, (1) our present standing, and (2) our ultimate standing in the day of the

<sup>1</sup> *Cambridge Medieval History*, i. 96.

<sup>2</sup> Susan Coolidge.



Lord. We persist in walking by sight and esteeming this existence Life, and the end of this existence Death; whereas, rightly viewed, this existence is but a stage in mortality, and so-called Death a step onwards to the fulness of immortality. Each one of us is, as it were, a limb of God, with the potentiality of perfection, and gradually, through the experience of multifarious error, to be developed into the full exercise of spontaneous and joyous activity.<sup>1</sup>

¶ There are two very striking engravings by a great, though somewhat unknown, artist, representing Death as the Destroyer, and Death as the Friend. In the one case he comes into a scene of wild revelry, and there at his feet lie stark and stiff corpses in their gay clothing and with garlands on their brows, and feasters and musicians are flying in terror from the cowed Skeleton. In the other he comes into a quiet church belfry, where an aged saint sits with folded arms and closed eyes, and an open Bible by his side, and endless peace upon the wearied face. The window is flung wide to the sunrise, and on its sill perches a bird that gives forth its morning song. The cowed figure has brought rest to the weary, and the glad dawning of a new life to the aged, and is a friend.<sup>2</sup>

Lo! all thy glory gone!  
 God's masterpiece undone!  
 The last created and the first to fall;  
 The noblest, frailest, godliest of all.

Death seems the conqueror now,  
 And yet his victor thou:  
 The fatal shaft, its venom quenched in thee,  
 A mortal raised to immortality.

Child of the humble sod,  
 Wed with the breath of God,  
 Descend! for with the lowest thou must lie—  
 Arise! thou hast inherited the sky.<sup>3</sup>

(1) To the believer death is not a step into the dim unknown, but a step into a region lighted by Jesus. Death is not the end of something; it is not an enemy that crushes us; it is not a loss, a defeat, a calamity; it is a possession, a weapon in our

<sup>1</sup> R. W. Corbet, *Letters from a Mystic of the Present Day*, 20.

<sup>2</sup> A. Maclaren.

<sup>3</sup> John Banister Tabb.



armoury, an opportunity, a resource. It is not a putting off, but a putting on.

At end of Love, at end of Life,  
At end of Hope, at end of Strife,  
At end of all we cling to so—  
The sun is setting—must we go?

At dawn of Love, at dawn of Life,  
At dawn of Peace that follows Strife,  
At dawn of all we long for so—  
The sun is rising—let us go.<sup>1</sup>

(2) Death is not the cessation of activity, but the introduction to nobler opportunities, and the endowment with nobler capacities of service. To become dead is an experience which is part of life. It is an experience in life's upgrowth and development. There are many whom we know, who always seem to have been thwarted; who seem to be disinherited; who do not seem to have come into their rightful place or possession. If we look at their lives, from the cradle to the certain grave, we cannot understand them. There seems no accomplishment; there seems no real purpose; there seems no achievement worth the travail. But we are not to look at any one, viewing him merely from the cradle to the grave. Death is our interpreter. It alone gives the true perspective; and when death comes to such as we have spoken of, it is seen to be the endowment of the disinherited. Life, its meaning, its purpose, its wealth, is for them beyond the grave. It is beyond the grave for all of us; but it is clearly seen to be so for them. Death is the endowment of the disinherited.

¶ The shutters are drawn and the people talk in whispers and walk softly, an immortal soul is passing out of time into eternity. His has been a commonplace life, but he has been faithful, and now he has reached the end of the journey. The sunset has come and the shadows of evening are thickening. Between two worlds hangs the veil which separates time from eternity. On this side the veil it is a house of sorrow. Loved ones are in tears and speak to each other in broken sobs and cry out to God for comfort.

But on the other side of that thin veil the scene is far different. It is the hour of coronation. There are no tears, no

<sup>1</sup> Louise Chandler Moulton.

sobbing grief and heart-broken prayers, but the chant of victory, for a faithful soul is coming to its own. All the pomp and circumstance of heaven centre there. The face of the pilgrim has lost its death pallor and the eyes shine with the light of expectant immortality. God is once more placing the crown of life on the brow of death.<sup>1</sup>

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—  
He hath awakened from the dream of life—  
'Tis we, who lost in stormy visions, keep  
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,  
And in mad trance, strike with our spirit's knife  
Invulnerable nothings.<sup>2</sup>

(3) Death does not separate and isolate us, but unites us to Jesus and all His lovers. Those we have lost—we have not lost them. Death is the guardian of our treasures. Here they would have faded, faded, faded. Do we ever think, that if friendship were to last for ever on this earth of frailty, the last horror would come—the hearts even of friends would get worn out? This mortal must put on immortality before life can stand its own strain and the glory of its meaning; the life we learn on earth is too high for earth; death alone can release it to its fit dominion. And death is the guardian of your hidden treasures and the keeper of your secret wealth, of all the unknown that lies beyond the veil for us—not only those whom we have let go, but those we have never known, whom God has made and is keeping for us. Our treasures, some of them, are here; but we will not know how rich we are till we have passed beyond.

I cannot think of them as dead  
Who walk with me no more;  
Along the path of life I tread  
They have but gone before.

The father's house is mansioned fair  
Beyond my vision dim;  
All souls are His, and, here or there,  
Are living unto Him.

And still their silent ministry  
Within my heart hath place,  
As when on earth they walked with me,  
And met me face to face.

<sup>1</sup> J. I. Vance, *Tendency*, 229, 233.

<sup>2</sup> Shelley, *Adonais*, xxxix.

Their lives are made forever mine;  
 What they to me have been  
 Hath left henceforth its seal and sign  
 Engraven deep within.

Mine are they by an ownership  
 Nor time nor death can free;  
 For God hath given to Love to keep  
 Its own eternally.<sup>1</sup>

¶ I have no fear lest my Saints should be far from me in their upper heaven; God's hierarchy is the hierarchy of conjoining love, and His great ones have their place in power to draw near even to the very least. The heights of heaven must be close to every lower place, as close as heart and heart may be.<sup>2</sup>

#### iv. Things Present, Things to Come.

All things are yours, says the Apostle, in the spiritual order (whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas) and in the terrestrial order (the world); the great powers of the world are yours (life and death); now he adds a third pair in relation to time (things present, and things to come). "Things present" comprehends all that can happen to us in the present state of things, and as long as we form part of it; while "things to come" denotes the great expected transformation, with its eternal consequences.

"Or things present, or things to come." How quickly the incidents of daily life are gliding over us! and as they pass, to our weak gaze they steal from us so much that we hold dear—the elastic step, the clear vision, the strong nerve, the beloved friend, the hard-earned gold. Sometimes they manifestly enrich us. For the young there is a constant sense of acquisition. One good and perfect gift follows swiftly on the heels of another. But when we have crossed the summit of life's hill there is an incessant consciousness of loss. Yet in God's sight, and in the spiritual realm, these distinctions vanish and pass away as mists under the touch of the sun: and we find that all incidents come to bless us; all winds waft us to our haven; all tribes bring their tribute into the throne-room of our inner being. We are not the creatures of circumstances, but their masters, their kings, their lords. All these things are the servants and tutors

<sup>1</sup> Frederick Lucian Hosmer.

<sup>2</sup> *A Modern Mystic's Way.*

appointed by our Father, to wait on and minister to us, His heirs.

1. "*Things present.*"—Our present lot is one of the "all things" which belong to us. We may not like it; we may greatly desire to be quit of it; we may be looking forward with intensest eagerness to a happier day, when our griefs or our difficulties shall no longer be with us. But these, remember, are from God to us, and God's love is in them. Let us not be anxious merely to rid ourselves of them. Let us dig in them, and we shall find treasure.

¶ We read some time ago, in an Australian paper, of a nugget worth a thousand pounds. In its picture a very ungainly block it looked. Most of us might have fallen in with it and heedlessly passed it by, or cast it aside as something in the way. The "digger" knew better, and he and his "mate" made a little fortune in a day.<sup>1</sup>

¶ We can be only in the present, but not in the present without a past, nor in the present without a future. We need a present stretching from an eternal past to an eternal future. In Jehovah alone is such a past, present, and future found (Ps. xc. 1, 2). Jehovah hath created the heavens and the earth. We are here, and here as an integral part of them. "Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominion: bless the Lord, O my soul." We are connected in that verse with all places of His dominion—everything, everywhere, my soul. Yet the foundations of our being, of our eternity, are in God—our possibility in His omnipotence—our futurity in the purpose of His will, as our actuality in our generic creation, and our individuality from Him who calls the generations from the beginning. So of men—so of our salvation, omnipotence, purpose, creation in Christ. There's something there that I'll no' spin out; it could be spun out into a long thread.<sup>2</sup>

2. "*Things to come.*"—The dim, vague future shall be for each of us like some sunlit ocean stretching shoreless to the horizon; every little ripple flashing with its own bright sunshine, and all bearing us onwards to the great Throne that stands on the sea of glass mingled with fire.

(1) All the future that hope anticipates or fear apprehends

<sup>1</sup> J. Walker of Carnwath, *Essays, Sermons, and Memoir*, 318.

<sup>2</sup> "Rabbi" Duncan, in *Memoir of John Duncan*, 498.

is ours, and we can safely leave it with Him. We are like a cathedral that has been building through ages; the scaffolding is round about it, obscuring its beauty and symmetry, but essential to the erection of the towering spires. But, when the whole thing is completed, the scaffolding will be torn down and burnt up, and the grand building will appear in perfection.

(2) The Hebrew youth who, eager and buoyant, full of joyous young life and aspiration, left his father's home to seek his brethrren in the distant pasture-lands, had no dream of "things to come" for him—no dream of his sale as a bondsman, of his exile, of Potiphar's house, of the false accusation, of the fetters and the dungeon, of the hope deferred and the sudden release, of the unexpected exaltation, of the reunion to his family in circumstances baffling all human calculation, and fraught with a history so grand, with an influence stretching down through all time and abroad over all lands. Not in his wildest imaginings did that future of wonders ever open up before him. But as you see the roll of his destiny unwind, as event follows event in the marvellous career, you recognize how truly all that came to him was his, and for his sake—chastening, sifting, humbling, purifying, preparing him alike for an earthly or a heavenly future. So is it for us all, if we are truly of the seed of Jacob.

¶ To-morrow is the Gorgon; a man must only see it mirrored in the shining shield of yesterday. If he sees it directly he is turned to stone. This has been the fate of all those who have really seen fate and futurity as clear and inevitable. The Calvinists, with their perfect creed of predestination, were turned to stone; the modern sociological scientists (with their excruciating Eugenics) are turned to stone. The only difference is that the Puritans make dignified, and the Eugenists somewhat amusing, statues.<sup>1</sup>

¶ The man who believes in God and in His loving providence need not darken his days by fretful cares and dread of evil to come. Believing in God's purpose of love with him, he knows that the future cannot bring anything contrary to that. If there are any trials and sorrows in that time to come, he knows that the Father's grace is sufficient for him through them all. If there are temptations, he knows he will not be tempted above what he can bear. His times are in God's hands. If his days are to be long, the more time to worship and to witness. If they

<sup>1</sup> Chesterton, *What's Wrong with the World*.



are to be few, the greater need to redeem the time now. If they are to be lived through much tribulation with darkness and storm, with a long stretch through the valley of the shadow, the Shepherd of his soul is ever with him. He will ask to see the heart of good in every evil that touches his life, the joy that slumbers in every pain, and in the hour of the final passion will commit his soul to God.<sup>1</sup>

¶ "Why wilt thou be concerned beyond to-day," asks Luther, "and take upon thyself the misfortunes of two days?" Put thus, with Luther's sanctified common sense, it is foolish from any point of view, but it is more than foolish from the point of view of faith.<sup>2</sup>

## II.

### YE ARE CHRIST'S, AND CHRIST IS GOD'S.

All things are yours, says St. Paul—with one exception. That exception is a very startling one. All things are ours—but ourselves! That is really what the Apostle means when he says, "All are yours, and ye are Christ's." And in this matter we are in precisely the same position as the Lord Jesus Christ. While all things are His, He is not His own any more than we are. "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." There is no one in this universe his own but God the Father. He is the only absolute Being; all the rest of us belong to some one else. Christ is God's and we are Christ's. Christ belongs to God by right of generation. "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." We belong to Christ by right of purchase. "Ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price."

1. It is because we are not our own, but Christ's, that all things are ours. How should we, poor creatures of yesterday, have all things if it were not for our connection with Christ? Has not God given all things to Christ? As the Word has it, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." And how should we have all things, if they were not given us by Christ, whose we are?

2. We are truly our own only when we are Christ's. The highest truth ever lies in the completest paradox. There are many things that we never truly possess till we give them up.

<sup>1</sup> Hugh Black, *Comfort*, 179.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 191.



It is only when we relinquish the world that we possess it. It is only when we let pleasure go that we obtain it. It is only when we give money away that we enjoy it. It is only when we lose our life that we find it. And it is only when we become Christ's that we become our own.

Lord, Thou art mine, and I am Thine,  
 If mine I am; and Thine much more  
 Than I or ought or can be mine.  
 Yet to be Thine doth me restore,  
 So that again I now am mine,  
 And with advantage mine the more,  
 Since this being mine brings with it Thine,  
 And Thou with me dost Thee restore:  
     If I without Thee would be mine,  
     I neither should be mine nor Thine.

Lord, I am Thine, and Thou art mine;  
 So mine Thou art, that something more  
 I may presume Thee mine than Thine,  
 For Thou didst suffer to restore  
 Not Thee, but me, and to be mine:  
 And with advantage mine the more,  
 Since Thou in death wast none of Thine,  
 Yet then as mine didst me restore:  
     O, be mine still; still make me Thine;  
     Or rather make no Thine and mine.<sup>1</sup>

3. All things are ours to serve us, and we are Christ's to serve Him. Service is the golden thread that runs through all creation, making it one. The ancient fable told that all things were bound by golden chains about the feet of God: and surely the real deep connection of which the fable spoke is to be found in the service which each lower order of creation renders to the one above, the service becoming rarer and more refined as the pyramid of existence tapers to a point.

Our Lord was also the servant of God, and we are His servants. We are, of course, His, in the sense of being owned by Him: He made us; He bought us; He claims us. But how many of us resemble Onesimus, the runaway slave of Philemon!—who probably bore the brand of his master, and had certainly been purchased by his gold, but who withheld from him his

<sup>1</sup> George Herbert.

service, following the bent of his own wayward will, and herding with the most abandoned of the populace that rotted in the criminal quarters of ancient Rome. We too have been bought by the Lord, at priceless cost; but we are far from serving Him with the same sort of loyal and whole-hearted ministry as that with which He, in His unwearied solicitude for us, serves the Father.

4. Whenever we get into this right attitude towards our Lord Jesus, we shall find that all things begin to minister to us in a constant round of holy service. Each event or circumstance in life becomes an angel, laden with blessed helpfulness, bringing to us the gifts of our beloved Master. That title, "Rabboni, Master," the sweetest name by which the prostrate soul can address its Saviour, does not degrade or demean it; but enables it, like the babe Christ, to be the recipient of costly presents sent from afar—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. If we have been chafing at our lot, thinking that time and things are robbing us, we may be sure that we are not as we should be towards Christ; and the true cure will be to get as a slave to His feet. Then all things will be ours in this deep sense.

5. "And Christ is God's." If Christ is at the right hand of God, then the world is ours. The world is transformed from a prison into a home, and life from a dream into a reality. All that we know and love and strive for is given permanence and worth.

To see the glorious fountain and the end,  
 To see all creatures tend  
 To thy advancement, and so sweetly close  
 In thy repose: to see them shine  
 In serviceable worth; and even foes,  
 Among the rest, made thine:  
 To see all these at once unite in thee  
 Is to behold felicity.

To see the fountain is a blessed thing,  
 It is to see the King  
 Of Glory face to face: but yet the end,  
 The deep and wondrous end, is more;  
 In that the Fount we also comprehend,  
 The spring we there adore:  
 For in the end the fountain is best shewn,  
 As by effects the cause is known.

From one, to one, in one, to see all things,  
Perceive the King of Kings  
My God and portion; to see His treasures  
Made all mine own, myself the end  
Of His great labours! 'Tis the life of pleasures  
To see myself His friend!  
Who all things finds convey'd to Him alone,  
Must needs adore the Holy One.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Traherne.



## OUR THREE JUDGES.

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## OUR THREE JUDGES.

But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.—1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

1. To understand this passage we must remember what the circumstances were which led St. Paul to write this first letter to the Corinthians. He had been absent from them for three years, during which time trouble and disorder of several kinds had been arising and spreading in the body of the Corinthian Christians. And the first of these troubles, to which he alludes in this letter, was the numberless divisions and parties into which they seemed to have broken. Full of intellectual restlessness, craving after new varieties of doctrine, they had formed at least three eager and violent parties: the party of Paul, the party of Apollos, the party of Cephas. We may gather that while St. Paul's own partisans had raised him to a height of authority which he would not for one moment claim, his opponents had brought the charge of unfaithfulness against him.

And in this letter he tells them what he would have them think of his office and his relations to them. Not a leader, not a favourite of a party, but a servant doing work for God, a steward dispensing to them the riches of the revelation of Christ. And if a servant and a steward, then the one merit that he would claim, the one thing that makes his service and his stewardship real is faithfulness. But who is to judge whether he has been faithful or not? Men may judge, but he does not care for their verdict: "It is a very small thing that I should be judged of you or of man's judgment." His own conscience may judge, but he will not stand on its acquittal alone: "though I know nothing against myself, yet am I not hereby justified." There is only one

judgment to which he will submit, only one utterly true and infallible approbation or condemnation, which will be awarded to those who will wait for it: "He that judgeth me is the Lord."

2. So here we have three tribunals, that of men, that of our own conscience, and that of Jesus Christ. An appeal lies from the first to the second, and from the second to the third. It is base to depend on men's judgments; it is well to attend to the decisions of conscience, but it is not well to take for granted that, if conscience approve, we are absolved. The court of final appeal is Jesus Christ, and what He thinks about each of us.

## I.

### MEN'S JUDGMENT OF US.

Dr. Stalker says that in every man there are four men—the man the world sees, the man seen by the person who knows him best, the man seen by himself, and the man whom God sees. We can reduce the four to three by taking the first two together. Under "men's" judgment we have (i) the judgment of the world, and (ii) the judgment of our friends.

#### i. The World.

The world looks at each of us and sees a certain image of us. It observes single actions of ours and watches our courses of action, and gradually makes up its mind about our character and conduct as a whole. It takes in a general impression of what we are, and gives it expression in a brief judgment on us.

From morning till night we are all of us passing judgment: we are passing judgment on the dead and the living, on those the most remote and the most unknown to us, and on those who are close to us, on the things we know best, and on the things of which we know nothing. Men, and classes, and nations throw back their judgments one at another, as if they were the most real and unquestionable certainties, about which no one could doubt. West judges east, and east judges west—each with equal confidence, each on grounds which are held to be clear and strong. Rich judge poor, and poor judge rich, family judges family, and neighbourhood judges neighbourhood, and party judges party. The learned judge the practical and the busy, the busy and

practical the learned. Nothing escapes, nothing daunts criticism, that is, the passing of judgment about which the judges do not doubt. Judgment means the pronouncing on what a thing really is, and the application to it of a rule, and standard, and law, which we assume to be beyond dispute. To this rule and standard we are for ever bringing not only actions and opinions, but whole courses of conduct, with all their intricate train of accompanying events, and what we call dispositions and characters, with their endless lights and shades, their perplexing contradictions, their terrible or pathetic mysteries. All comes naturally within our range of judgment: on all, we seriously or lightly, conscientiously or carelessly, wisely or stupidly, fairly or unfairly, exercise our judgment. We cannot help it. It is a part of our lives.

These judgments swell into what is called public opinion—the great force which has to do with the changes of society and institutions, which settles what shall stand and what shall fall. They accumulate into the traditions, the moral standards of a society or a generation, its governing beliefs, its tyrannical usages. And in private life and affairs this unceasing and universal habit of judging appears in all the manifold incidents of our relations and intercourse, as members of a family or a body, as friends, or acquaintances, as working with or working against others, as indifferent lookers-on, as in accidental contact with them. From morning to night we are judging what they do, and what they are; and they are judging us. Out of it grow our preferences, our admirations, our likings and dislikings, our lifelong friendships; it expresses itself in our strong words of approval and condemnation, it hardens into our bitter animosities, our unconquerable antipathies. A case of conduct comes before us, and whether it is our duty to judge it, or only our amusement and our pastime, we judge it. A person with all those things which make one man different from another—his special qualities, his habits and purposes and ways—comes before us and we judge him. And this is not here and there, or now and then, but all day long and everywhere, as a matter of course, with every one. It is part of the necessary system of the world: we see clearly that without this exercise of human judgment, in its many forms, the world could not go on.

And a great deal of it is righteous, wise, salutary judgment; judgment which supports what is good, which directs what is

just and right, which brands and confounds evil. The quality of human judgment is as various as the objects on which it is exercised. There is responsible judgment and irresponsible, there is deliberate and well-informed judgment, and there is off-hand and cruelly ignorant judgment. But besides what is reasonable and deliberate in judgment, there is a vast mass of judging with no purpose, with no control, of which nothing is meant to come or can come, except perhaps mischief. And *what* judging! What amazing and easy generalizations from the slenderest facts! What recklessness of evidence! What ingenious constructions put on the simplest and the most imaginary appearances! What defiant confidence and certainty, coupled with the grossest indifference to the actual truth, and the grossest negligence to ascertain it! What superb facility in penetrating and divining hidden corruption of motives for unavowed ends!

¶ Nice distinctions are troublesome. It is so much easier to say that a thing is black, than to discriminate the particular shade of brown, blue, or green to which it really belongs. It is so much easier to make up your mind that your neighbour is good for nothing, than to enter into all the circumstances that would oblige you to modify that opinion.<sup>1</sup>

¶ Part of the fascination of Principal Rainy for those who knew him was that this man, compelled to assume leadership, had no ambition to do "eminent service" but only to be "eminently spiritual"; that, forced into the forefront of battle after battle, he had set his hopes on the refinement and quiet of the life of a scholar; that, often appearing to be, or at least charged with being, a wily ecclesiastic, he was really one with a child's heart of trust and love and obedience towards God. It was this subtle paradox of character and career that, in part, made him so interesting alike to friend and opponent.<sup>2</sup>

To your judgments give ye not the reins  
 With too much eagerness, like him who ere  
 The corn be ripe, is fain to count the grains:  
 For I have seen the briar through winter snows  
 Look sharp and stiff—yet on a future day  
 High on its summit bear the tender rose:  
 And ship I've seen, that through the storm hath past,  
 Securely bounding o'er the watery way,  
 At entrance of the harbour wrecked at last.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> George Eliot, *Amos Barton*.

<sup>2</sup> *Life of Principal Rainy*, i. 147.

<sup>3</sup> Dante, *Paradiso*, xiii. 130-38, tr. by Wright.

1. Now, for one to say, "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgement," is not a conclusive proof of apostolic mission or apostolic life. Defiance of man's judgment, indifference to public opinion, cannot ordinarily be considered a symptom of moral health, and it may be the finishing stroke in the education of a scoundrel. Indeed, a man can hardly be said to have thoroughly accomplished the curriculum of the school of vice, and to have fairly earned his diploma in crime, till he has beaten out of his nature all respect for the moral judgments of his fellows, and bred in himself a scorn for the verdict of public opinion. Even the pretence of goodness, with an eye to the demands of public opinion, is a moral crutch to a man. When he flings it away he loses the last support of decency. A regard for the favourable judgment of our fellows is usually the surviving grace which attends the death-bed of the virtues; and when she, the nurse, is discharged, the man surrenders himself to a moral collapse.

In a high sense, and to most men, it is a great and momentous thing to be "judged of man's judgement." Very few of us are aware of the reinforcements which our virtue receives from the pressure of our neighbour's opinion, and the persistent impact of the moral sense that is diffused in the social atmosphere in which we move. A man generally lives up to what is expected of him. The organized life of which he is a part presses him into place, and keeps his feet in the routine of duty. The habit of the community finds him, holds him, becomes to him law, breeds in him a personal habit which he no more thinks of breaking than a planet thinks of leaping from the clutch of the law of gravitation. Hence the peril, when a boy goes out from the shelter of his home, and the familiar faces of his native town, and plunges a lone swimmer, unnoted and unrecognized, in the turbid torrent of life that surges in some vast metropolis. The faiths, the principles, the moral habits with which his nature is stocked, these he takes with him; and if they be of the right sort, they will bear him up, and he will breast the tide with a strong, manful stroke. But all the more he will need them, because he leaves behind him the safeguards of loving, watchful eyes.

The more closely we study the ways of men, the more clearly we recognize that the heavier weights we can pile on the cage



in which we pen our hungry passions, the less danger there is that those passions will upset the cage, and break loose in our life. The judgments of our fellow-men—the men whom we meet in the streets, in business, in social contact—serve as weights for this purpose. If we defy those judgments, not only do we suffer smart and loss in our outward life, but generally—which is far worse—we suffer impairment of moral power in our inward life. For a man to live under the perpetual challenge of the violated conscience of his fellows hardens him, embitters him, gives a morbid and distorted action to his own conscience. He is apt to yield to the restless push of whim and passion. Even if he honestly engages in the fight with sin, he is like a soldier who has been driven from behind the breastworks, and is compelled to face his foe alone in the open field with his naked sword.

¶ The public opinion fostered by a Tiberius or a Nero was of little worth to a man like St. Paul. But the public opinion of to-day bears the imprint of the Divine Christ. Something from that peerless, spotless Soul who brought God to this earth has flowed into the great thought of the world. Men have caught, in fragments at least, His interpretation of life, His ideal of life, His law of life. Very imperfectly do the actual lives of men reflect all these; but His image lies in broken lines on the turbid pool of our modern life, and the strange Divine light in His soul has shot through the conscience of Christendom. The civilization in which we live is a civilization that bears the finger-marks of Christ. What we call public opinion is the invisible breath, the subtle aroma, of a Christian civilization.

¶ Habitually to ignore and set at naught what other people think *may* be as foolish and as fatal as habitually to consult and wait upon it. *Athanasius contra mundum*—it is a magnificent phrase, and it stands for a great truth; but I fear it has to answer for a good deal of stupid and obstinate wrong-headedness which is not always called by its proper name.<sup>1</sup>

¶ Christian public opinion, the expression of the Spirit of Christ in the united will, emotion, and intellect of human societies, has wrought, and is working miracles. It has raised the standard of purity, of honesty, of loving-kindness; and above all, and including all, it has established the sense of brotherhood, of mutual obligation and responsibility. But it has not had its

<sup>1</sup> G. Jackson.



perfect work. It has been paralysed by timidity, the fear of persecution and ridicule, the fear of plain speaking; it has been seduced by temptation, the personal desire for ease and pleasure, the corporate desire for power and wealth. But more than all, it has been weakened by division, and obscured by controversy and by an exaggerated sense of the paramount duty of withstanding erring brethren to the face because they are to be blamed.<sup>1</sup>

2. But for most of us the peril does not lie that way, but rather in a tame subservience, a too ready compliance with the ways and thoughts of the world about us. Is there anything that we need more in every department of life to-day than the spirit of sturdy, uncompromising independence which breathes through these words of the Apostle: "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; he that judgeth me is the Lord"? We want men, like him, who fear God and have no other fear.

¶ The mischief which arises from habitual anxiety about the good opinion of men is more than can be told. It is speaking strongly, but truly, to say that it makes the whole of our life unchristian; that it dethrones our Maker from His lawful authority, and sets up an idol in His place; that it makes us heathens as completely, for all purposes of our souls' danger, as if we were to bow down and offer sacrifice to a graven image.<sup>2</sup>

¶ Take the case of the famous Francis Bacon. Bacon's greatness on its intellectual side it is almost impossible to exaggerate. It was his proud, and by no means empty, boast that he had taken all knowledge to be his province. Such a vision of truth, such power to comprehend and to speak it, have rarely been granted to any man. In sheer intellectual might he stands, in our nation at least, with the one exception of Shakespeare, without a peer. And yet, notwithstanding all his magnificent gifts, we see him stooping to almost incredible meanness and perfidy, suffering himself to become the abject tool of a wretch like Buckingham, a mere "chessman," as he himself put it, in the hand of a monarch so weak and contemptible as James I. What is the explanation? Why this strange mingling of mud and marble, of meanness and magnificence? Let Dean Church, who of all Bacon's critics has, perhaps, understood him best, answer: "There was," he says, "in Bacon's 'self' a deep and fatal flaw. *He was a pleaser of men.* There was in him that subtle fault, noted and named, both by religion and philosophy,

<sup>1</sup> J. H. F. Peile, *The Reproach of the Gospel*, 194.

<sup>2</sup> T. Arnold.

in the *ἄρεσκος* of Aristotle, the *ἀνθρωπάρεσκος* of St. Paul, which is more common than it is pleasant to think even in good people, but which, if it becomes dominant in a character, is ruinous to truth and power." In all history is there any warning so tragic of the shipwreck that men suffer when they trim their sails to catch the favour of the many or the great?<sup>1</sup>

¶ It is clear from Bishop Wilkinson's recorded words that no man was ever more intensely sensitive to the least breath of opposition or hostility; he instinctively desired and valued the good opinion of the world. But he valued his conscience and his message more, and never modified the truths he had to tell; while his very sensitiveness kept him from ever presuming or dictating, and gave him an instinct for conciliation which was never blunted.<sup>2</sup>

¶ Let not thy peace depend on the tongues of men, for whether they judge well of thee or ill, thou art not on that account other than thyself.<sup>3</sup>

## ii. Our Friends.

1. The man seen by the persons who know him best may be quite a different man from the man the world sees; for every man has two sides—one to face the world with, and one to show to the friend of his heart.

¶ I once had a friend. The popular opinion about him was that he was very quiet and rather dull, without ideas, or experience, or character of his own. Such was the man the world saw. But the man I saw was quite a different being—a man of the most genial humour, who could break into conversation the most lively and discursive or the most serious and profound, with a mind richly stored with unusual knowledge, a fertile imagination, and a moral nature which had passed through all the great experiences of the human soul and all the peculiar experience of our new time.<sup>4</sup>

Ah, but that's the world's side, there's the wonder,  
Thus they see you, praise you, think they know you.  
There, in turn, I stand with them and praise you,  
But the best is when I glide from out them,  
Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,  
Come out on the other side, the novel  
Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of,  
Where I hush and bless myself with silence.

<sup>1</sup> G. Jackson.

<sup>2</sup> A. C. Benson, *The Leaves of the Tree*, 119.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas à Kempis.

<sup>4</sup> J. Stalker.

2. But if the too severe judgments of others are hard for us to bear, their too favourable judgments are far more perilous to us. We are so apt to assume that all the pleasant things said about us are true, to be satisfied with approbation which we know to be nothing but superficial. We each, no doubt, if we choose, know our own weaknesses and our own sins; perhaps they are unknown to every one else, perhaps they are known only to some few of our friends. Yet if we seem to be accepted by those who do not know them, with favourable judgment and trusting affection—perhaps respected and loved for our external pleasantness, treated as we know we should not be treated if they knew our real inner selves—is it not a dangerous temptation to us to accept the affection and the approbation as our true merit, and to forget the weakness or the sin that is not known?

Greatly his foes he dreads, but more his friends;  
He hurts me most who lavishly commends.<sup>1</sup>

## II.

### OUR JUDGMENT OF OURSELVES.

We pass from the judgment of others to our own. "I judge not mine own self."

1. The Apostle is not to be taken here as contradicting what he says in other places. In one of these same letters to the Corinthians he says, "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." So he does not mean here that he is entirely without any estimate of his own character or actions. That he did in some sense judge himself is evident from the next clause, because he goes on to say, "I know nothing against myself." If he acquitted himself, he must previously have been judging himself. His acquittal of himself, however, is not to be understood as if it covered the whole ground of his life and character; it is to be confined to the subject in hand—his faithfulness as a steward of the mysteries of God. But though there is nothing in that region of his life which he can charge against himself as unfaithfulness, he goes on to say, "Yet am I not hereby justified."

All of us who have read the life of St. Paul will admit not only that he was sincere after his conversion to Christ, but that

<sup>1</sup> Churchill, *The Apology*.

also as a Pharisee of the Pharisees he was a man of integrity even when he persecuted the Church of Christ, because he did it ignorantly in unbelief. St. Paul was a Pharisee, but never a hypocrite; he never desired to live under false pretences, but was always faithful to his convictions, even when they were mistaken. He therefore could say especially now as an Apostle, "I know nothing against myself"; in other words, "As far as I know, I am not guilty of any unfaithfulness in my office; I desire to be faithful, but I do not put up my judgment against yours, or against the judgment of the world. I was sadly mistaken when I was a Pharisee; and therefore I have learned not to fall back upon my own opinion as a court of final appeal—"I judge not mine own self." The strength of my life is not in my personal opinion, though I am not conscious of having been guilty of any insincerity. My conscious integrity doubtless adds individuality to my convictions, and strength to my life; but that is not the sustaining force of my life, it is not that from which I draw my strength. Though I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified.

¶ Grant that you acquit yourself at the bar of conscience, that the acquittal is impartial, is sincere. Are you competent as a judge? Have you before you all the data on which the verdict must be founded? How much do you know of yourself? At this very moment your friends, your neighbours, even casual strangers, discern faults in you which you do not actually and perhaps may not ever suspect. They see one side of you; you yourself another. Yours is the larger fraction, but it is only a fraction still. There are intricate complications in the heart of every man, which far transcend his powers to unravel. At times we may almost realize, not indeed the knowledge of ourselves, but the knowledge of our ignorance of self. A shock is given to the moral system by some unwonted occurrence—a disappointment, a loss, a sickness, a bereavement, a desertion, a surprise of temptation, a victory of sin. A momentary light is flashed in upon the man's heart, and reveals to him his inability, his meanness, his inconsistency, his degradation. Then he begins to suspect how little he has known of his true self. But the flash is gone, and the old darkness gathers about him. What do you remember now of the eventful history of some one sin which has long become a habit—the warnings, the compunctions, the counter-acting influences, the growing attractions, the faint resistance, becoming feebler and feebler, as the allurements became stronger

and stronger? How little do you scrutinize, record, realize the motives which urge you to the conduct of to-day or to-morrow, too absorbed in the energy of the processes, and too eager about the success of the results! Yet just here, in this past history, here, in these directing motives, are the main elements in which your responsibility consists, the chief data on which your final sentence must be based.<sup>1</sup>

¶ It is not permitted to the most equitable of men to be a judge in his own cause.<sup>2</sup>

The seas that shake and thunder will close our mouths one day,  
The storms that shriek and whistle will blow our breaths away.  
The dust that flies and whitens will mark not where we trod.  
What matters then our judging? we are face to face with  
God.<sup>3</sup>

2. The man as seen by himself is a very different one from the man seen by the world or even by his closest friend. Is he better or worse? He is both.

(1) In some respects we all, perhaps, know ourselves to be better than we are supposed to be. There are bright visitations in the mind which we could not communicate to another if we tried. Then there are some of the best things which we dare not speak of; humility, for example, spoken of is humility no more. What religious man can fully describe the tragic moments when his soul lies prostrate and penitent before God, or the golden moments when he is closest to the Saviour? Such things are soiled by fingering. Besides, in all highly toned minds there is a modesty about explanations; and even in the frankest friendship there is many a word, many an act, which we know is misinterpreted to our disadvantage, but which we cannot explain.

"Where have you been, my brother?

For I missed you from the street?"

"I have been away for a night and a day

At the great God's judgment-seat."

"And what did you find, my brother,

When your judging there was done?"

"Weeds in my garden, dust in my doors,

And my roses dead in the sun:

<sup>1</sup> J. B. Lightfoot.

<sup>2</sup> Pascal, *Thoughts*.

<sup>3</sup> Dora Sigerson Shorter.



“And the lesson I brought back with me,  
 Like silence, from above—  
 On the Judgment-Throne there is room alone  
 For the Lord whose name is Love.”<sup>1</sup>

(2) All men know themselves to be, in some respects, better than they are supposed to be. But do we not also know ourselves to be worse? What do we say—not with the tongue with which we would speak to another, but with that voice with which the soul speaks to itself? Have we never said to ourselves, “If people only knew me as I know myself, they would scorn me; if my friend knew me as I really am, he would be my friend no more”? Away back in our life, are there not hours about which we neither could, would, nor should speak? Is there ever a day that there do not pass through our mind thoughts of pettiness and vanity, movements of covetousness, envy and pride, perhaps dark doubts and blasphemies? Have we no secret habits and sinful inclinations and desires which dare not see the light?

¶ Great were the wrath and consternation of the pirates when they saw their dilemma; for, having no provisions, they must either starve or seek succour at the fort. They chose the latter course, and bore away for the St. John's. A few casks of Spanish wine yet remained, and nobles and soldiers, fraternizing in the common peril of a halter, joined in a last carouse. As the wine mounted to their heads, in the mirth of drink and desperation, they enacted their own trial. One personated the judge, another the commandant; witnesses were called, with arguments and speeches on either side. “Say what you like,” said one of them, after hearing the counsel for the defence; “but if Laudonnière does not hang us all, I will never call him an honest man.”<sup>2</sup>

¶ You constantly hear a great many people saying I am very bad, and perhaps you have been yourself disposed lately to think me very good. I am neither the one nor the other. I am very self-indulgent, very proud, very obstinate, and *very* resentful; on the other side, I am very upright—nearly as just as I suppose it is possible for man to be in this world—exceedingly fond of making people happy, and devotedly reverent to all true mental or moral power. I never betrayed a trust—never wilfully did an unkind thing—and never, in little or large matters, depreciated another that I might raise myself. I believe I once had affections

<sup>1</sup> L. Maclean Watt.

<sup>2</sup> Parkman, *Pioneers of France in the New World*, i. 76.



as warm as most people; but partly from evil chance, and partly from foolish misplacing of them, they have got tumbled down and broken to pieces. It is a very great, in the long-run the greatest, misfortune of my life that, on the whole, my relations, cousins and so forth, are persons with whom I can have no sympathy, and that circumstances have always somehow or another kept me out of the way of the people of whom I could have made friends. So that I have no friendships, and no loves.

Now you know the best and worst of me; and you may rely upon it it is the truth. If you hear people say I am utterly hard and cold, depend upon it it is untrue. Though I have no friendships and no loves, I cannot read the epitaph of the Spartans at Thermopylæ with a steady voice to the end; and there is an old glove in one of my drawers that has lain there these eighteen years, which is worth something to me yet. If, on the other hand, you ever feel disposed to think me particularly good, you will be just as wrong as most people are on the other side. My pleasures are in seeing, thinking, reading, and making people happy (if I can, consistently with my own comfort). And I *take* these pleasures. And I suppose, if my pleasures were in smoking, betting, dicing, and giving pain, I should take *those* pleasures. It seems to me that one man is made one way, and one another—the measure of effort and self-denial can never be known, except by each conscience to itself. Mine is small enough.<sup>1</sup>

More than your schoolmen teach, within  
Myself, alas! I know;  
Too dark ye cannot paint the sin,  
Too small the merit show.

I bow my forehead to the dust,  
I veil my eyes for shame,  
And urge, in trembling self-distrust,  
A prayer without a claim.<sup>2</sup>

### III.

#### CHRIST'S JUDGMENT OF US.

The final judgment to which St. Paul appealed was his Master's. "He that judgeth me is the Lord"; in other words, I am His steward, and to Him am I ultimately responsible. I do not come to you for your approval to sustain me in my work;

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin, in E. T. Cook's *Life of Ruskin*, i. 490.

<sup>2</sup> Whittier, "The Eternal Goodness."

I do not go to men in general for their approval as the one confidence upon which I shall lean; I do not come to my own soul, to my own sense of integrity and fidelity, as the one thing that is to support me; I must go back to my Master: the one who has sent me forth to the world in His service, and I must stand or fall by what He shall say.

¶ He who judges us is God. From this judgment there is no escape, and no hiding-place. The testimony of our fellows will as little avail us in the day of judgment, as the help of our fellows will avail us in the hour of death. We may as well think of seeking a refuge in the applause of men from the condemnation of God, as we may think of seeking a refuge in the power or the skill of men from the mandate of God, that our breath shall depart from us.<sup>1</sup>

O Lord and Master of us all!  
 Whate'er our name or sign,  
 We own Thy sway, we hear Thy call,  
 We test our lives by Thine.

Thou judgest us; Thy purity  
 Doth all our lusts condemn;  
 The love that draws us nearer Thee  
 Is hot with wrath to them.

Our thoughts lie open to Thy sight;  
 And, naked to thy glance,  
 Our secret sins are in the light  
 Of Thy pure countenance.

Thy healing pains, a keen distress  
 Thy tender light shines in;  
 Thy sweetness is the bitterness,  
 Thy grace the pang of sin.

Yet, weak and blinded though we be,  
 Thou dost our service own;  
 We bring our varying gifts to thee,  
 And thou rejectest none.<sup>2</sup>

1. The great truth of the judgment of God, the perfect all-knowing judgment to which all other judgments are as nothing, sweeps away all the sham and self-deception of double

<sup>1</sup> Chalmers.

<sup>2</sup> Whittier, "Our Master."

lives. "He that judgeth me is the Lord." Can we, on our knees before our heavenly Father, for one moment be satisfied with the undeserved approbation of those who do not know us as we are? When we understand and remember that all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do, we can no longer rest satisfied with any successful concealment of part of our character from human eyes. It is as though a searching flood of pure light were thrown upon our inmost lives, forcing us to purge them of all that is unworthy, bracing us to attain to a life lived in the realization of the pure presence of God. For the power of the truth of the judgment of God is found in this—that it is the supreme declaration that there lies before us all a goal to be attained, an ideal to be realized, a high standard by which to live. We need it all our lives, in youth and in older life. It is so natural to acquiesce in all sorts of conventional standards of goodness and duty, standards which we know to be unworthy of our Christian calling, yet which satisfy the demands of the conscience of our society. But to each single soul face to face with the eternal Father, these lower standards must fade into their true worthlessness. The Divine ideal of goodness—purity and truth and love—does not change with the shifting ideals of society, does not make exceptions to suit the weaknesses of human nature. That is the ideal which we have vowed to keep before us; that is the ideal by which God will judge us.

¶ The one principle which governs the entire vision of Jesus is that Love judges, and that it is by Love that men are tested. The men and women of loving disposition, who have wrought many little acts of kindness which were to them so natural and simple that they do not so much as recollect them, find themselves mysteriously selected for infinite rewards. The men and women of opposite disposition, in spite of all their outward rectitude of behaviour, find themselves numbered with the goats. A cup of cold water given to a child, a meal bestowed upon a beggar, a garment shared with the naked—these things purchase heaven. One who Himself had been thirsty, hungry, and naked, judges their worth, and He judges by His own remembered need. It is love alone that is Divine, love alone that prepares the soul for Divine felicity.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> W. J. Dawson, *The Empire of Love*, 76.

2. "He that judgeth me is the Lord." Mark the tense of the verb—present, not future; "judgeth," not "shall judge." Side by side, concurrently with the imperfect and fallible judgment of man, there goes on unerring and unresting the perfect judgment of God. There is in the Acts of the Apostles a very striking picture of a little scene in a court of justice in Palestine. The prisoner is St. Paul; standing round him like wild beasts hungry for their prey are his accusers, "bringing against him many and grievous charges." With one word he silences them all—"Cæsarem appello!" "I appeal unto Cæsar." After that they have no more that they can do. And for us too our Cæsar sits upon the throne, and to Him may the daily appeal for judgment be made: "He that judgeth us is the Lord."

¶ I have read somewhere of a young musician listening to the first rendering of his first great composition. He stood up above the orchestra, and as he watched how the music which was the child of his own soul stirred and swayed the hearts of the listening multitude, a strange new emotion swept over his own heart: and yet through all he kept his eye fixed on one who sat there amidst the throng, the face of one who was a past master in the art in which he himself was but a beginner; and every change in the master's face meant more to him than the thunders and plaudits of the crowd.<sup>1</sup>

¶ The governor of a Crown Colony may attach some importance to colonial opinion, but he reports home; and it is what the people in Downing Street will say that he thinks about. We have to report home; and it is the King whom we serve to whom we have to give an account.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> G. Jackson.

<sup>2</sup> A. Maclaren.

JUDGING PREMATURELY.

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## JUDGING PREMATURELY.

Judge nothing before the time.—1 Cor. iv. 5.

1. THE time of which the Apostle speaks is, of course, the Advent of the Lord. "Judge nothing," he says, "before the time, until the Lord come." He is thinking of his own character and work, which certain Corinthian teachers have been endeavouring to asperse. And what he declares is that in questions pertaining to his personal sincerity he admitted the authority of no earthly tribunal, he did not even rely on the verdict of conscience, he made his appeal to Christ. It was for Christ's approval that he worked here; it was Christ's vindication that he expected hereafter. When the end came, so he implies, the Corinthians would know what manner of man he had been—pure in motive, upright in conduct, faithful in witness. Meanwhile, if anything in his conduct and methods seemed perplexing, they were to avoid all harsh and uncharitable opinions, possess their souls in patience, and wait for the full and final explanation—"when the Lord comes."

2. Now, what is the exact force and import of the precept? Is it meant that we are to form and express no judgment whatever upon human conduct, upon anything that we see and hear of in the world around us? This cannot possibly be meant, and for more reasons than one.

(1) The first reason is that, if we think at all, many judgments, of the mind if not of the lips, are inevitable. What is the process that is going on with every human being, every day from morning to night? Is it not something of this kind? Observation is perpetually collecting facts and bringing them under the notice of reason. Reason sits at home, at the centre of the soul, holding in her hands a twofold rule of law—the law of truth and the law

of right. As observation comes in from its excursions, laden with its stock of news, and penetrates thus laden into the chamber of reason, reason judges each particular: by the law of right, if it be a question of conduct; by the law of truth, if it be a question of faith or opinion. In a very great number of cases the laws of truth and right, as held by the individual reason, are very imperfect laws indeed; still reason does the best she can with them, and goes on sitting in her own court, judging and revising judgments from morning until night. Probably two-thirds of the sentences we utter, when closely examined, turn out to be judgments of some kind; and if our mental or moral natures are healthy, judgments of some kind issue from us as naturally as flour does from a working corn-mill.

How can it be otherwise? God has given to every man a law or sense of right. As a consequence, every action done by others produces upon us a certain impression, which, when we put it into words, is a judgment. When we hear of a monstrous fraud, of a great act of profligacy, or of a great act of cruelty, we are affected in one way; when we hear of some self-sacrificing or generous deed, of some conspicuous instance of devotion to duty, we are affected in another: we condemn or we approve as the case may be. Woe to us, if we do not thus condemn or approve; for this would mean that our moral nature was drugged or dead.

¶ In our day men sometimes think it good-natured to treat truth and falsehood as at bottom much the same thing; but this cannot be done for long with impunity. In the first age of Christianity it was not so. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One," wrote St. John to the first Christians, "and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son." This direct language of St. John would jar upon the ear of a generation which thinks that something is to be said for every falsehood, and something to be urged against every truth; but it is the natural language of those to whom religious truth is a real thing, and not a passing sentiment or fancy. The law of truth within us necessarily leads to our forming judgments no less than does the law of right.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. P. Liddon.

¶ One great evil of sin is that it takes away our right to be indignant when other people sin, and so in time our standard of thought is lowered to their scale.<sup>1</sup>

(2) In the second place, Scripture stimulates and trains the judicial faculty within us, making its activity keener and wider than would have been possible without it. The servants of God in the Bible are intended to rouse us to admire and imitate them; and what is this but a judgment of one kind? The sinners in the Bible, from Cain to Judas Iscariot, are intended to create in us moral repulsion, not for their persons, but for their crimes; and what is this but an inward and emphatic judgment of another kind?

¶ Then came the maxim that the indignation expressed by Him against hypocrisy was no precedent for us, inasmuch as He spoke as a Divine person. I contended that it was human, and that if a man did not feel something of the same spirit under similar circumstances, if his blood could not boil with indignation, nor the syllable of withering justice rise to his lips, he could not even conceive His spirit. Mr. E—— agreed to this, to my surprise, and told an anecdote. "Could you not have felt indignation for that, Robertson?" My blood was at the moment running fire—not at his story, however, and I remembered that I had once in my life stood before my fellow-creature with words that scathed and blasted; once in my life I felt a terrible might: I knew, and rejoiced to know, that I was inflicting the sentence of a coward's and a liar's hell.<sup>2</sup>

3. The words of St. Paul, then, do not forbid us to form judgments and act on them, they simply convey a warning against premature judgments, an admonition in regard to those hasty and ill-considered verdicts we are apt to pronounce both on people and on facts, while in reality the elements for a sound and safe verdict are not in our hands. There are many facts, enterprises, events, and problems in regard to which it is of the very greatest importance to remember the rule of the text, "Judge nothing before the time." They are all those matters into which there enters the element of ignorance, uncertainty, and change. They are those matters in which the fact must be reckoned with that *you* may be changed, or that *they* may be

<sup>1</sup> Phillips Brooks, *Life*, 79.

<sup>2</sup> Robertson, in *Life and Letters of the Rev. F. W. Robertson*, 212.

changed, or that *surroundings* may be changed, or that the *amount of light* may be changed, so that data that are hidden now may be known hereafter, to the altering of human estimates, the overturning of human views.

Let this be lead unto thy feet, that slow  
 Thy steps may be (as of one tired) to give,  
 When not convinced by sight, a yes or no.  
 For sunk is he 'mid fools in lowest place,  
 Who no distinction makes, and to the same  
 Conclusion doth arrive in either case.  
 Since popular opinion is inclined  
 Erroneous judgments oftentimes to frame,  
 Self-love comes in, the intellect to blind.<sup>1</sup>

(1) Judge nothing before the time, *in view of possible changes in yourself*. We all change. We change steadily, we change necessarily, in the process of the years. We change in structure, change in intellect, change in spirit. Our perceptions, our tastes, our needs, all of them alter. And therefore what seems worthless at one stage of our history becomes valuable at another, not because the thing is different in itself, but because *we* are different who have come to prize it.

Here is a lesson for youth. There are few things to which the youthful are so prone as the practice of judging—judging men, judging methods, judging facts, judging books; and they are continually judging before the time. Youth is often very dogmatic, even when Christianized. It is apt to be contemptuous towards what does not come up to its youthful standard, depreciatory towards what does not square with its youthful tastes. Take the views of youth in regard to *qualities of character*. Certain of these qualities get scant justice from the young—patience, for instance. How little do the young think of patience in comparison with self-reliance, fortitude, boldness of initiative, brilliance of attack. They are all for action, all for aggressiveness, all, too, for the men in whom action, and aggressiveness are the predominant features. But in setting slight store by patience, assigning it a lesser function, relegating it to a lower place, they are judging before the time.

Or pass from qualities of character to *modes of presenting*

<sup>1</sup> Dante, *Paradiso*, xiii., tr. by Wright.

*truth*, and the attitude towards these. The young are often enamoured of the showy—the showy in religious testimony, the showy in religious teaching. What draws them and holds them is often the element of novelty, the ingenious in thought, the rhetorical in language, the exciting in appeal. And yet, in looking down on the quiet and homely—plain, sober truth, plainly and soberly preached—they are judging before the time.

¶ When Dr. Wayland was president of Brown University, and professor of moral science, his eldest son, who was a senior, in reciting to him one day, drew from his father, by a question, the expression of a certain opinion. "The esteemed author of this book," said the young man, holding up his father's text-book on moral science which the class was using, "holds a different opinion." "The author of that book, my son," said Dr. Wayland quietly, "knows more now than he did ten years ago." The teacher of any science who does not know more now than he did ten years ago, who never finds occasion to modify and qualify and reshape his utterances, is probably a cheap and poor sort of teacher.<sup>1</sup>

(2) But again, judge nothing before the time, *in view of possible changes in the matters to be judged*. These changes may be real and great. There are, for instance, the changes that are incident to a natural progress, from the partial to the perfect, from the provisional to the final, from the rudimentary stage to the developed, from the dust and confusion of the beginning to the faultlessness of the ending. Hence the commonplace, so often quoted and so often exemplified, that the public should not see half-done work.

¶ I know a place of worship, the interior of which exhibits an amount of comfort, completeness, and beauty beyond the aspect of most, and certainly in advance of its own original condition. Yet in the first confusion, when old arrangements were disturbed, levels altered, and pews removed, one visitor after another entered the church, and the verdict of each was unfavourable: "The work should never have been begun. The building should never have been touched. The result will be failure and disfigurement." So the grumblers went on, till, to avoid a general panic, as well as to secure peace for the actual work, those in charge had to lock the door. The fault-finding was all premature, as the fault-finders themselves acknowledged. Things

<sup>1</sup> Washington Gladden, *Where does the Sky Begin*, 66.



fell into place and order and harmony; panel matched with panel, colour blended with colour, and the satisfactoriness of the final result justified the disorder and inconvenience of the temporary means.<sup>1</sup>

¶ When an artist has projected a great picture, when he has completed all his studies, conceived his plan, and decided upon his methods, he proceeds to make his preliminary sketches. He roughly draws his various figures, in such postures and with such general expression as he means them to have in the canvas where he will finally place them. They are roughly done at first, and, taken by themselves, suggest no adequate notion of what the general composition will be. Perhaps he even paints each sketch with some elaboration. But even then it would be impossible to make a fair estimate of any of these carefully studied figures, or pronounce upon their colouring; because in the mind of the artist every one of these details has a definite relation to every other, and neither face nor figure, outline nor colouring, can be understood, except as it is thought of in connection with all the rest. So the real value of all these separate particulars cannot be estimated alone. But when the artist begins to draw them in together, when he groups these sketches on one surface, when he blends the colours, and combines them in relation to the lights and shadows of the picture, then one may begin to see, and not till then, all that the studies contained. They can be interpreted only by their final combination, their place in the finished picture.<sup>2</sup>

(3) Judge nothing before the time, *in view of possible changes in surrounding circumstances*. Changes may yet reveal the use of the object in question—evince the need of it, prove the value of it, and make you thankful it was ever provided. Till then, however puzzling the thing may be, be patient, be watchful, and do not judge unfavourably before the time.

¶ There are certain religious definitions, certain theological formulas, the meaning and value of which are by no means very clear at first. They are so dry, so abstract, so rigid, so formal in character, so antiquated in phrase, that they seem at times a simple clog on the memory, mere dead-weight on the mind. "How useless such lore!" you say. "Surely the time might be better occupied, the faculties might be better exercised, than in memorizing and storing such arid material as this!" But in speaking thus, you may be judging before the time. Truth

<sup>1</sup> W. A. Gray.

<sup>2</sup> J. C. Adams.



summed up and expressed in fixed and formal dogma may lie in the mind and the memory, unappealed to and unused, so long as there is nothing to disturb. But let circumstances change. Let the sky be dark with the clouds of religious doubt, let the air be agitated with the winds of religious controversy, let the pathway be blocked with the drifts of religious error, and then comes the use of such statements as these, making the road plain, keeping the road open, for those who can put them to use, while those who have no such provision are left to wander amidst the mists and the quagmires of fanaticism, fickleness, and doctrinal mistake.<sup>1</sup>

¶ To summer travellers in Norway, ignorant of the implements of the country, there is a frequent cause of curiosity in certain cumbrous constructions of wood, disposed at intervals by the side of the public roads. There they lie, baking and peeling in the hot summer sunshine, never used, yet never removed. What is the meaning of them? They are lumber on the road. They are eyesores to the tourists. They scare the horses. Surely the best thing to do with them is to break them up into posts for the fences, or faggots for the fire. That is perhaps your impression, as you look at them on a bright July day. But if you visited Norway amidst the snows of the winter or spring, you would be thankful that these homely contrivances are in readiness. They are simply wooden snow-ploughs of unusual shape and size, kept on the spot for the use of the peasants who maintain the road. To say on a summer day that they are useless is plainly to judge before the time.<sup>2</sup>

(4) Judge nothing before the time, *in view of possible changes in the amount of light*, with the consequent unveiling of facts at present concealed, data and evidence at present hid.

¶ The supreme Court of the United States, just after the inauguration of President Buchanan, decided (over the case of Dred Scott) that slaves were property and not persons. This decision Lincoln, after succeeding Buchanan, challenged. At New York on 27th February 1860, he said: "Perhaps you will say, the Supreme Court has decided the disputed constitutional question in your favour. Not quite so. But waiving the lawyer's distinction between dictum and decision, the court has decided the question for you in a sort of way. The court has substantially said, it is your constitutional right to take slaves into the Federal Territories, and to hold them there as property. When I say the decision was made in a sort of way, I mean that it was made

<sup>1</sup> W. A. Gray.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

in a divided court, by a bare majority of the judges, and they not quite agreeing with one another in the reasons for making it; that it is so made that its avowed supporters disagree with one another about its meaning, and that it was mainly based upon a mistaken statement of fact—the statement in the opinion that ‘the right of property in a slave is distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution.’”<sup>1</sup>

4. Hitherto we have spoken of matters that may often be settled in time; we revert under this head to the standpoint of St. Paul, and speak of matters that for the most part must be left to eternity. Here a wide field opens up, suggesting at least four different cautions.

(1) Judge no one’s *character* before the time. As a rule, you have not the evidence. The outer life which man sees may be different from the inner life which God sees, and may lie beyond your analysis, because beyond your ken. You see your neighbour’s failures, but not his aspirations; his stumbles into what is wrong, but not his struggles after what is right; his occasional sins, but not his fierce and lifelong temptations. God and God alone strikes the balance; let God and God alone be the arbiter. Judge not till the last great day, when He admits you to participation in His knowledge, and asks you to assent to His award.

¶ Sometimes, under the most unpromising appearances, there is a fund of hidden good. We all of us have known people with a manner so rude as to be almost brutal, whom we have afterwards discovered to have very tender hearts. And persons are to be found who have a reputation for stinginess, but who really save up their money that they may give it to the poor without letting the world know what they do. In the same way we have met people whose conversation strikes us as uniformly frivolous, or at least as wanting in seriousness, and yet it may be that this is the effect of a profoundly serious, but shy, reserved nature, bent on concealing from any human eye the severe self-scrutinizing, self-repressing life within.<sup>2</sup>

¶ While we are coldly discussing a man’s career, sneering at his mistakes, blaming his rashness, and labelling his opinions—“Evangelical and narrow,” or “Latitudinarian and Pantheistic,” or “Anglican and supercilious”—that man, in his solitude, is perhaps shedding hot tears because his sacrifice is a hard one,

<sup>1</sup> *The History of North America*, xv. 106.

<sup>2</sup> H. P. Liddon.

because strength and patience are failing him to speak the difficult word, and do the difficult deed.<sup>1</sup>

(2) Judge no one's *work* before the time—least of all, if that work be spiritual. Much of the truest and finest spiritual work that goes on is of a kind that defies tabulation. It refuses to be set down in statistics, or grouped in anecdotes, or presented in any tangible or calculable form whatsoever. The balance of the sanctuary is a rarer and more delicate instrument than the balance of the shop, though the balance of the shop too often takes its place. You cannot weigh the fruits of the Tree of Life as a shopman weighs apples and oranges over his counter, nor can you count the number of conversions as a shopman counts the coins in his till. The mistake of many, both without the Church and within it, lies in forgetting this, and importing the commercial principle of so much visible return for so much visible outlay—a principle which is degrading to the work, discouraging to the worker, and presumptuous and dictatorial towards God.

¶ The publication of the papers (afterwards published under the title of *Unto this Last*) in the *Cornhill Magazine* raised a storm of indignant protest; even a theological heresy-hunt could not have been more fast and furious. The essays were declared to be “one of the most melancholy spectacles, intellectually speaking, that we have ever witnessed.” “The series of papers in the *Cornhill Magazine*,” wrote another critic, “throughout which Mr. Ruskin laboured hard to destroy his reputation, were to our mind almost painful. It is no pleasure to see genius mistaking its power, and rendering itself ridiculous.” The papers were described by the *Saturday Review* as “eruptions of windy hysterics,” “absolute nonsense,” “utter imbecility,” “intolerable twaddle”; the author was “a perfect paragon of blubbering”; his “whines and snivels” were contemptible; the world was not going to be “preached to death by a mad governess.” The last passage of the book in particular filled the *Saturday* reviewer with indignant disgust. Let us hear the passage, for the author considered it one of the best he ever wrote, and it has reached many a mind and touched many a heart. He had been pleading for wiser consumption, for fairer distribution, for a more thoughtful direction of labour, for a simpler mode of life, and then continued thus:—

“And if, on due and honest thought over these things, it

<sup>1</sup> George Eliot, *Janet's Repentance*.

seems that the kind of existence to which men are now summoned by every plea of pity and claim of right, may, for some time at least, not be a luxurious one;—consider whether, even supposing it guiltless, luxury would be desired by any of us, if we saw clearly at our sides the suffering which accompanies it in the world. Luxury is indeed possible in the future—innocent and exquisite; luxury for all, and by the help of all; but luxury at present can only be enjoyed by the ignorant; the cruelest man living could not sit at his feast, unless he sat blindfold. Raise the veil boldly; face the light; and if, as yet, the light of the eye can only be seen through tears, and the light of the body through sackcloth, go thou forth weeping, bearing precious seed, until the time come, and the kingdom, when Christ's gift of bread, and bequest of peace, shall be "Unto this last as unto thee"; and when, for earth's severed multitudes of the wicked and the weary, there shall be holier reconciliation than that of the narrow home, and calm economy, where the Wicked cease—not from trouble, but from troubling—and the Weary are at rest."<sup>1</sup>

(3) Judge no one's *discipline* before the time. Do not judge your own. Perhaps you think that discipline harsh. Perhaps you think it singularly unsuitable. You are tempted to imagine that your spiritual character would have been better nurtured and your spiritual interests better served had God taken another method with you—assigning you a different burden, leading you a different way. Not so. You may be sure that the burden fits *your* shoulders, that the path fits *your* feet, as they fit those of no one else. Wherefore be obedient, be patient, be hopeful. What you know not now you shall know hereafter, if not in this life, certainly in the day that makes all things clear.

¶ We judge others according to results; how else?—not knowing the process by which results are arrived at.<sup>2</sup>

(4) Judge no one's *destiny* before the time; you know not the determining elements. They are often hidden from you in life, and some who have passed as opponents of religion have, Nicodemus-like, been its secret friends. And in death the data may be hidden too. I speak with caution, even with trembling, remembering the danger of abuse; but I say that while the possibility of a late repentance permits no one to presume in his own case, it permits no one to despair in the case of others.

<sup>1</sup> E. T. Cook, *The Life of Ruskin*, ii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*.

¶ I have not much sympathy with those who have great suspiciousness about false religion. I have not much sympathy with strong, positive [condemnatory] affirmations about people's religion, where there is nothing decidedly bad. I have not much sympathy with those who are not disposed to admit and to hope that there may be reality where there is the appearance of some little good thing toward the Lord God of Israel.<sup>1</sup>

¶ The tragedy of our lives is not created entirely from within. "Character," says Novalis, in one of his questionable aphorisms—"character is destiny." But not the whole of our destiny. Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, was speculative and irresolute, and we have a great tragedy in consequence. But if his father had lived to a good old age, and his uncle had died an early death, we can conceive Hamlet's having married Ophelia, and got through life with a reputation of sanity, notwithstanding many soliloquies, and some moody sarcasms towards the fair daughter of Polonius, to say nothing of the frankest incivility to his father-in-law.<sup>2</sup>

¶ A sailor, who had long been the object of a mother's prayers, but had nevertheless lived a godless and a thoughtless life, was swept overboard in a storm. While he struggled in the waves a vision of his past rose before him, vivid, concentrated, intense, together with what seemed a last opportunity of making his peace with God. That vision he improved. That opportunity he embraced. Then and there he repented. Then and there he gave himself to Christ. "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto him, into his holy temple." And his first thought after the transaction was this: "I shall die a Christian, and my mother will never know of the change." But she did know; for he lived to tell her, and to testify to others besides, by the consistency of his Christian walk and faithfulness of his Christian service.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Rabbi" Duncan, in *Memoir of John Duncan*, 425.

<sup>2</sup> George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*.

<sup>3</sup> W. A. Gray.





FOR THE FEAST.

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## FOR THE FEAST.

Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened. For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ: wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.—1. Cor. v. 7, 8.

THERE had been hideous immorality in the Corinthian Church. St. Paul had struck at it with heat and force, sternly commanding the exclusion of the sinner. He did so on the ground of the diabolical power of infection possessed by evil, and illustrated that by the very obvious metaphor of leaven, a morsel of which, as he says, "leaveneth the whole lump," or, as we say, "batch." But the word "leaven" drew up from the depths of his memory a host of sacred associations connected with the Jewish Passover. He remembered the sedulous hunting in every Jewish house for every scrap of leavened matter; the slaying of the paschal lamb, and the following feast. Carried away by these associations, he forgot the sin in the Corinthian Church for a moment, and turned to set forth, in the words of the text, a very deep and penetrating view of what the Christian life is, how it is sustained, and what it demands. "Wherefore let us keep the feast . . . with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

In the text three events are commemorated, (1) the search which the Israelites made for leaven immediately before the Passover; (2) the slaying of the Passover lamb; and (3) the Passover feast. That is also the order in which the thoughts occur to the Apostle. So we have—

### I. The Old Leaven.

"Purge out the old leaven."

## II. Our Passover.

“Our passover also hath been sacrificed,  
even Christ.”

## III. The Feast.

“Wherefore let us keep the feast.”

## I.

## THE OLD LEAVEN.

“Purge out the old leaven.”

1. The appointed preparation for the Jews, on the point of keeping their Passover, was putting away leaven out of their houses. For seven whole days they were to eat only unleavened bread. In the first instance this was meant to remind them of the haste with which God brought them out of Egypt, when they took their dough before it was leavened. But it had also this other meaning, that men should labour and strive and pray to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. For that is the old leaven of which the Apostle here makes mention; the corrupt nature and bad habits of men, filling them full of malice and wickedness.

In consequence of the command that they should purge out the leaven at the Passover, the head of the household among the Jews, especially when they grew more strict in their ritual, would go through the whole of the house on a certain day to search for every particle of leavened bread. It was generally done in the evening with a candle, and the servants and others would accompany the goodman of the house to search for every crumb. Clothes were shaken, cupboards were emptied, drawers were opened, and if a mouse ran across the room and might be supposed to carry a crumb of bread into its hole, they trembled lest a curse should rest on the home. So strict did they become that our Saviour might have rebuked them as straining at a gnat while swallowing a camel. We, however, have no need to fear excessive strictness in getting rid of sin. With as scrupulous a care as the Israelite purged out the leaven from his house we are to purge out all sin from ourselves, our conduct, and our conversation.

¶ I remember hearing a friend of mine describe what he himself once saw in Palestine, and, of all places in Palestine, in Nazareth, and, of all places in Nazareth, in a carpenter's shop there. The carpenter would not allow him to witness the search in the house lest his presence should defile the home; but he allowed him to enter the shop and witness the search there. The man went about the work with a will; he was evidently thoroughly in earnest; he girded up his loins as if he had a day's work before him, and then proceeded to search with the utmost zeal. Carefully and conscientiously he turned over every board, he moved all his tools, he swept out the whole place, he opened every drawer, looked into every cupboard; there was not a crevice or a cranny in the wall that was not inspected lest there might be a tiny crumb of leaven anywhere in the shop. As he drew towards the close of his search my friend suddenly heard him utter an exclamation of horror, and looking round he saw him standing as though he had seen something most alarming. If he had found a viper or a cockatrice he could not have been more horrified than he seemed to be. What was it? In the last corner that he had visited, under some shavings, he had come across a little canvas bag, and in this little bag there were a few crumbs of leavened bread; one of the workmen had left it on some former occasion. It was enough; it defiled the whole place. With the utmost possible gravity and solemnity, and with a most anxious expression of countenance as though it were a most critical and important business, the man took hold of two pieces of wood, and using them as a pair of tongs he raised up the bag, and holding it off at arm's length, marched out of the shop and dropped the leavened crumbs, bag and all, into the centre of a fire that he had burning outside ready for such a contingency, and so he purged out the old leaven.<sup>1</sup>

¶ Self-scrutiny is often the most unpleasant, and always the most difficult, of moral actions. But it is also the most important and salutary; for, as the wisest of the Greeks said, "an unexamined life is not worth living."<sup>2</sup>

2. "Leaven" had a figurative use in Jewish speech, signifying the working of evil affections in the soul. "Lord of Eternity," prayed one of the Rabbis, "it is open and known in Thy sight that we desire to do Thy will. Subdue that which hindereth, to wit, the leaven which is in the lump." "If," it is written in the paschal rubric, "a man be on the way to offer his paschal lamb,

<sup>1</sup> Canon Hay Aitken.

<sup>2</sup> J. Strachan, *Hebrew Ideals*, i. 93.

and it come into his mind that he has leaven in his house, if he can return and remove it, and then return to his office, let him return and remove it; but, if he cannot, let him destroy it in his heart." Our Lord came not to abrogate the ancient Law but to fulfil it; and, ever exalting the spirit above the letter, He took this Jewish prescription and gave it a loftier interpretation. "If," He said with evident reference to that article of the paschal rubric, "thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." And St. Paul taught the same lesson when he wrote to the Corinthians: "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened."

The working of leaven did not seem, at first sight, to belong to the more regular process of nature. Man's imagination had been struck here by the likeness to something dark, ominous, evil. This strange disturbance into which the natural substances were thrown by the arrival of this alien matter—what did it portend? This secret insertion of so little within so much by which there was set moving an inner ferment, a yeasty working, a spreading excitement—what was it? What did it express? Was it healthy? Was it not typical, rather, of disease, corruption? It looked so uncanny, so uncomfortable. How insidiously it crept! How unaccountably it penetrated! It seemed to eat its way along; it insinuated its hidden force within the mass; until what was before quiet and at peace began to stir with unaccountable agitation, began to shake and heave and swell. And what a portentous inflation! What a mysterious tumult! Surely here (men said) is the very picture of what we know of the nature of sin! This is the very way of its attack. A seed, a germ, hardly suspected for its smallness, plants itself deep down within some secret recess of the soul, and from that moment the old peace has begun to break up. At first, it is a mere spot of uncomfortable disturbance; but it is ever moving forward; the stir spreads wider; there is gradual agitation; there is growing upheaval. We never quite know how or when, but somehow, point by point, our steadiness dissolves; our orderly restraint



weakens; always the ferment is touching a fresh layer; always the festering eruption breaks out in a new place. And, wherever it goes, there is this same effervescence, this inflation, this overstepping of old bounds, this swelling exuberance, this irresistible turmoil. Stronger and more violent grows the heat of the motion; it rushes forward over the whole material; nothing can, at last, hold out against its devouring extravagance. It eats into the whole body as doth a canker. Like a poison in the blood, it permeates every nook and corner. And all from so tiny a beginning! Yes; like a little leaven "it leaveneth the whole lump." So men thought of leaven. They might use it, indeed, for the homeliest affairs; but still it became for them a type of the movement of evil. Its working seemed to embody the dreadful character of the mystery of iniquity. It had, therefore, proverbially a sinister significance. And in the Bible itself it is generally used, as a symbol, under this comparison.

3. The leaven is called "the old leaven of malice and wickedness."

(1) *Malice*, that is, ill-nature, envy, grudging, is a subtle thing, mingling itself with many parts of men's conduct, where they little suspect it themselves. For example: you hear a neighbour praised for something on which you are apt to value yourself. Ask your own conscience fairly: do you feel no sort of pang, no jealousy or envy, at this? Is it not too plain, that we are most of us inclined to repine at our neighbour's getting things which we think we might as well have had ourselves? Now, whatever you may judge of it, this is the leaven of malice, and must be purged out.

¶ It is said of the famous English clergyman, Venn, that in his declining years he was removed to the obscurity of a country parish, and a stirring young curate was employed to help him in his work. Nobody wanted to hear the old man preach, while the curate attracted surprising congregations. Naturally the rector's family grew jealous. They could not bear the advancement of a junior above their honoured father. But the arrows were quenched in a boundless ocean of charity, for with true Christ-likeness the old man said, "Carry me to hear him preach. God honours him, and I will honour him. No man can receive anything except it be given him from heaven."<sup>1</sup>

(2) So in respect of that *wickedness* of which the great Apostle

<sup>1</sup> G. C. Peck, *Old Sins in New Clothes*, 284.

warns us—fraud, falsehood, cunning, insincerity. It is what people generally can least endure to be charged with: to call a man a liar is the bitterest of all affronts; and those who would confess many faults will search far and wide, and invent all sorts of excuses, rather than plead guilty to this. And many seem to think that if they affirm no direct falsehood, they are sufficiently purged from this sin. But surely they judge too hastily. There is a leaven of cunning as well as of malice, which is apt to mingle with all our conduct, and poison and infect it and make it unworthy of God, to a degree far beyond what we can imagine, till we have really watched and tried ourselves. We get into mean, pitiful habits, of setting traps for our own praise; of contriving to take the best of everything for ourselves; of getting off in all business with less than our share of expense, or trouble, or ill-will. This is the leaven of selfish cunning, so worked into the daily behaviour of most men that they are not themselves at all aware of it: they never, of course, dream of repenting of it.

¶ It is important to bear in mind that, in speaking of sin and sinners, we are apt to take as our type of sin one particular class of sin, the sins of the “publican and the harlot.” It is natural that, revolting, ruinous, flagrant as they are, they should *represent* sin to our mind. Yet there are sins more malignant, and more difficult to conceive cured. I can conceive many of these poor creatures, whom the world speaks of as “lost,” blindly “seeking after God.” It is difficult to me to conceive this of those who, with full knowledge and all advantages, prey on human happiness in one way or another—the selfish seekers of their own interest and pleasure.<sup>1</sup>

As are those apples, pleasant to the eye,  
But full of smoke within, which use to grow  
Near that strange lake, where God pour'd from the sky  
Huge showers of flames, worse flames to overthrow;

Such are their works that with a glaring show  
Of humble holiness, in virtue's dye  
Would colour mischief, while within they glow  
With coals of sin, though none the smoke descry.

Ill is that angel which erst fell from heaven,  
But not more ill than he, nor in worse case,  
Who hides a traitorous mind with smiling face,  
And with a dove's white feather masks a raven.

<sup>1</sup> Dean Church, *Life and Letters*, 265.

Each sin some colour hath it to adorn;  
Hypocrisy, almighty God doth scorn.<sup>1</sup>

4. For power to purge out the old leaven, we must have some participation in Christ, by which there is given to us that new life which conquers evil. In the words immediately preceding the text, the Apostle bases his injunction to purge out the old leaven on the fact that "ye are unleavened." Ideally, in so far as the power possessed by them was concerned, these Corinthians were unleavened, even whilst they were bid to purge out the leaven. That is to say, be what you are; realize your ideal, utilize the power you possess, and since by your faith there has been given to you a new life that can conquer all corruption and sin, see that you use the life that is given. Purge out the old leaven because ye are unleavened.

¶ Power, that is the great practical matter for us men, once our faces are set towards the light; and in the life in Christ the way of power is marked out. Everywhere, all over the world, in its darkest places, as a man follows the light he sees, the power comes, and more light comes, and power grows anew, Divine power flowing in upon him and through him, whether he knows it or not. But in the Christian faith we are given an open vision of the way of power, as well as of the light and truth of men; open-eyed we may yield to Christ being made Man in us—the Christ who ever comes to enlarge the realm of His Incarnation; and we may possess and wield His power as our own, reason giving consent, heart warmed by the vision, and the presence of Him who reigns. In this, too, Christianity stands at the centre of things, and fulfils and completes them all.<sup>2</sup>

¶ When God was about to call Abraham to a higher level of service and a higher range of truth—to require of him a perfection which might seem unattainable, and to unfold to him a grace which might seem incredible, He prefaced the call with the revelation, "I am El Shaddai—God Almighty, the Wielder of power, the All-sufficient." After that nothing is impossible, nothing incredible. The august title reveals the infinite resources from which man can draw, the Divine energy which ensures his success. Absolute reliance on God's almightiness is the condition of power. For every duty there is an appointed dynamic: "Thy God hath commanded thy strength." The Almighty will not let His servants fail or be put to shame, else that is not His name.

<sup>1</sup> William Drummond.

<sup>2</sup> William Scott Palmer.

He links His power to His imperatives. What we can do in our own strength is one thing; what we are empowered to achieve by omnipotent grace is far different. The possibilities of life are to be measured, not by the ability of man, but by the power and will of God. Instead of desiring a lower ideal, we should pray for a higher energy. "Lord," said Augustine, "give what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt." "Attempt great things for God, expect great things from God," said Carey. "Who is sufficient for these things?" asked St. Paul, and presently answered, "Our sufficiency is of God."<sup>1</sup>

¶ It does not matter how intricately sin may have been woven into all the tissues of life and coloured word and deed and thought; Christ by the Spirit can take it all away. He can "purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin." A lump of ore, when mixed with clay and mire, may be washed clean, as the soul by the washing of regeneration; but fire acts upon it in a different way. It liberates the metal from the stoney or clayey surroundings, and sets one free from the other. Often more than one mineral is contained in the same rock. Take, for example, a piece of Cornish arsenical mundic. Here is stone speckled all through with minute but thoroughly distributed portions of the poison known as arsenic. Here also in close neighbourhood is a vein of pure copper ore. Mixed with both is the quartz and earthy matter in which they are imbedded, which is the earliest deposit. We will call the stony portion the simple creature life; the arsenic the evil nature, injected as a foreign substance by some external power; and the copper representing the new life, also foreign to nature, and also external in its introduction into the heart. Here they are together in close association, though not in fellowship. Can nothing separate them? Yes, fire can, and every particle of the arsenic can, by its power, be separated from its companions.

## II.

### OUR PASSOVER.

"Our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ."

It is very remarkable that this is the only place in St. Paul's writings where he articulately pronounces that the paschal lamb is a type of Jesus Christ. There is only one other instance in the New Testament where that is stated with equal clearness and emphasis, and that is in St. John's account of the Crucifixion,

<sup>1</sup> J. Strachan, *Hebrew Ideals*, i. 97.

where he recognizes the fact that Christ died with limbs unbroken, as being a fulfilment, in the New Testament sense of that word, of what was enjoined in regard to the antitype, "a bone of him shall not be broken."

1. The words carry us back in imagination to the last night of Israel's bondage in the land of Egypt. That was a season of horror and anguish to the Egyptians, for at midnight the first-born of every household was killed by the Angel of the Lord. It was a memorable night to Israel also, though they passed it in perfect safety. The Hebrews had been informed by Moses and Aaron of God's purpose to slay the first-born of the Egyptians, and had been instructed as to the mystic ceremony by the observance of which they would protect themselves from being overtaken in the same terrible doom. On the night of the Exodus the head of each household was to kill in sacrifice a lamb, or a kid of the goats. He was to put the blood in a basin, and afterwards sprinkle it with a sprig of hyssop on the upper door-post and the two side-posts of his house. The lamb was then to be roasted whole, and eaten with unleavened bread and a salad of bitter herbs. The family were to eat it in the attitude of pilgrims about to set out on a long journey—with their loins girded, their sandals strapped on their feet, and their staves ready in their hands. All this was done in the evening; and a few hours later, at midnight, the first-born of every Egyptian family was smitten by the Angel of Death. But no one died that night in any Israelitish house the door of which was marked with the blood of the paschal lamb. In giving the command about the sprinkling of the blood, the Lord had added this gracious promise: "When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." And God announced that the Passover was to be to the Jews an ordinance for ever; it was to be an annual festival commemorative of the deliverance of their forefathers from Egypt; the people were to observe it with solemnity and gladness; and parents were to teach their children its significance.

2. There are three thoughts contained in the statement that Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us.



(1) It emphasizes, with each great approach of the redeemed people to God as their covenant Lord, that a "*Passover*" is *necessary*. It becomes a memorial to be kept at Sinai, at Gilgal, and again with special solemnity after periods of backsliding from God, as in the great Passovers under Hezekiah and Josiah, and at the return from the captivity under Ezra, after their separation from the filthiness of the heathen. Besides this, it is the annual covenant feast to be kept unto the Lord throughout all their generations. Thus it bears witness through all the Old Dispensation to man's need of redemption and God's pledge to meet that need, till that day when the disciples asked the great Antitype Himself, "Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?"

¶ Think of these two chains which have always fettered the spirit of humanity, and say whether Christ accomplished nothing for man's redemption in breaking them—the sense of guilt on the conscience and the fear of death. I do not mean to say that men have actually been delivered from these. We are too ignorant of our own franchise, like the poor Israelites who despised their freedom, and perished through their unbelief in the wilderness. But the chains are broken for those who will enjoy their freedom; and countless multitudes have tested to the full their emancipation, and all Christendom feels some common benefit from the deliverance.<sup>1</sup>

(2) It offers, next, the Divine *provision for that need*. If we ask, "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" we receive the answer: Not in that ancient service with its filaments stretching back into the remote past, not even in its great Christian counterpart, which unites in one link of loving rite the Lord's Supper with the Jewish Passover, but in that of which both alike speak so clearly, "the death of the Cross." Christ by His own blood has "entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

If Christ hath died His brethren well may die,  
Sing in the gate of death, lay by  
This life without a sigh:  
For Christ hath died and good it is to die;  
To sleep when so He lays us by,  
Then wake without a sigh.

<sup>1</sup> J. Ll. Davies.



Yea, Christ hath died, yea, Christ is risen again:  
 Wherefore both life and death grow plain  
 To us who wax and wane;  
 For Christ who rose shall die no more again:  
 Amen: till He makes all things plain  
 Let us wax on and wane.<sup>1</sup>

(3) It also expresses *the simple appropriation of faith*, whereby alone the blessings of Christ's Passion can become ours. The paschal lamb was offered, not as in any way worthy of God's acceptance; but, being looked on as a substitute for the family, it saved the first-born from death. God did not wish to smite Israel, but to save them. But He did not simply omit the Israelite houses and pick out the Egyptian ones through the land. He left it to the choice of the people whether they would accept His deliverance and belong to Him or not. The angel of judgment was to recognize no distinction between Israelite and Egyptian save this of the sprinkled, stained doorposts. Death was to enter every house where the blood was not visible; mercy was to rest on every family that dwelt under this sign. God meant that all should be rescued, but He would not force any—we may say He *could* not force any—to yield themselves to Him.

And now Christ our Passover is slain and we are asked to determine whether we will use His sacrifice or not. We are not asked to add anything to the efficacy of that sacrifice, but only to avail ourselves of it. Wherever there was faith there was a man in the twilight sprinkling his lintel, and resolved that no solicitation should tempt him from behind the blood till the angel had passed by. He took God at His word; he believed that God meant to deliver him, and he did what he was told was his part. To us God opens a way out from all bondage and from all that gives us the spirit of slaves.

¶ Stephen Grellet was the child of French parents of the nobility, and was born in the city of Limoges, in the beautiful district of Limousin, a few years before the great Revolution broke out in France. He was brought up as a Roman Catholic, and shared in the sufferings of the Royalist party like other members of the nobility. In the fortunes of war he was captured and ordered to be shot. But at that moment a commotion arose and he escaped to America, and began soon

<sup>1</sup> Christina G. Rossetti, *Poems*, 168.

after that life of wonderful usefulness which carried him several times across Europe on errands of mercy, brought him before kings and popes, exposed him to perils of war and imprisonment, and made him one of the first workers in the United States for the abolition of slavery. Upon what did that career turn? First, upon a sense of conviction of sin so keen that an awful voice seemed to call from Heaven to him as he walked in the fields "Eternity! eternity! eternity!" and he felt himself sinking as in the lowest hell. Then, when he was like one "crushed under the millstones" with the sense of his sin, there came "the fullness of heavenly joy" through trust in a living Saviour. He realized that "there was One, even He whom I had pierced—Jesus Christ the Redeemer—that was able to save me. I saw Him to be the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. . . . On my earnest petition being put up to Him, the language was proclaimed, 'Thy sins are forgiven, thine iniquities are pardoned.'"<sup>1</sup>

¶ Safdar Ali was the son of a Moslem judge in a native state of India, and attended Agra College, studying among other things very closely the Moslem faith. After leaving college he obtained the post of Deputy-Inspector of Schools in the Punjab, and there he came across Sufi philosophers and fakirs. From them he learned to practise austerities of life in order to obtain purity of heart. But he failed to find it, and when he told them of his failure they answered that he must find an infallible director. Among sheikhs and fakirs he sought for such a one in vain, till at length he decided on the pilgrimage to Mecca. As he was preparing for it he met with a copy of Pfander's *Mizan-al-Haqq*, or "Balance of Truth," a defence of Christianity against Moslems. This led him to decide to study the Christian faith, and for three years, instead of going to Mecca, he pondered over the Bible and Koran side by side, deserted by his wife, but helped by a Christian convert Nehemiah. The result was that he found Christ as a personal Saviour, and could say:—

My Friend was near me, and I roamed far in search of Him;  
My well was full of water, while I was parched and thirsty.  
Praise upon praise, to-day my journey is ended.  
Now the last stage is reached—my pilgrimage is o'er.<sup>2</sup>

3. But the particular reason why the Apostle here states that our Passover has been sacrificed is to offer a reason why the old leaven should be purged out. His thought, accordingly, is that

<sup>1</sup> W. Guest, *Life of Stephen Grellet*, 24.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the C.M.S.* ii. 555.

Christ is our representative; in offering Himself He offers us to God; and we are no longer our own.

Christ is our passover, because through Him there is made the acknowledgment that we belong to God. He is in very truth the prime and flower, the best representative of our race, the first-born of every creature. He is the One who can make for all others this acknowledgment that we are God's people. And He does so by perfectly giving Himself up to God. This fact that we belong to God, that we men are His creatures and subjects, has never been perfectly acknowledged save by Christ.

¶ Only those of us who can see that we ought to live for God can claim Christ as our representative. Only those who wished to go free from Egypt to serve God sacrificed the paschal lamb; the service of God, the living as His people, was the object they had in view. What object have we? If we mean to be of His spirit, if we mean to count it our meat and drink to do God's will, if we are really disposed to seek the advancement of God's purposes, and not to seek great things for ourselves, we may speak of Him as our Substitute and Sacrifice. If He is our Passover, the meaning of this is that He gives us liberty to serve God, that He comes to redeem us from all that hinders our serving Him. The one question is, Do we at heart wish to give ourselves up to God? Do we find in His life and death, in His submission to God and meek acceptance of all God appointed, the truest representation of what we would fain be and do, but cannot?<sup>1</sup>

### III.

#### THE FEAST.

"Wherefore let us keep the feast."

1. "Wherefore," exclaims the Apostle (and remember that "*Wherefore*" loses its force unless we have appropriated to ourselves the benefit of the Paschal sacrifice), "let us keep the feast." When we know that for us the Paschal blood has been shed, that word "wherefore" indicates a logical conclusion which must follow from Gospel premises; and this inference is so patent and powerful, that there is no escape from it. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: wherefore let us keep the feast."

2. The "feast" alluded to in these words is neither the

<sup>1</sup> Marcus Dods.

Passover of the Law nor a Communion season of the Christian Church. It is the whole life of the followers of Jesus, as that life is led in Him, and as, in it all, they are partakers of His joy. Their Paschal Lamb is for them always slain. For them the incense of Christ's offering continually ascends before the throne of God. They have put the leaven of sin out of their hearts and lives, not for an hour only, or a day or a week, but for ever. Therefore they keep constant festival. Their whole life, with its memories of deliverance from bondage, and with the first-fruits of a spiritual harvest ripening around them in their free and independent home, has a festival light thrown over it. They always eat the flesh and drink the blood of One who never fails either to support or quicken them. The Christian Passover never ends.<sup>1</sup>

3. Two things are suggested by keeping the feast.

(1) *Taking food*.—For the point to be observed is this, that just as in that ancient ritual the lamb slain became the food of the Israelites, so with us the Christ who has died is to be the sustenance of our souls, and of our Christian life. "Wherefore let us keep the feast."

Feed upon Him; that is the essential central requirement for all Christian life. And what does feeding on Him mean? "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" said the Jews, and the answer is plain now, though so obscure then. The flesh which He gave for the life of the world in His death, must by us be taken for the very nourishment of our souls, by the simple act of faith in Him. That is the feeding which brings not only sustenance but life. Christ's death for us is the basis, but it is only the basis, of Christ's living in us, and His death for us is of no use at all to us unless He that died for us lives in us. We feed on Him by faith, which not only trusts to the Sacrifice as atoning for sin, but feeds on it as communicating and sustaining eternal life—"Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, wherefore let us keep the feast."

Again, we keep the feast when our minds feed upon Christ by contemplation of what He is, what He has done, what He is doing, what He will do; when we take Him as "the Master-light

<sup>1</sup> W. Milligan, in *The Expositor*, 3rd Ser., viii. 164.

of all our seeing," and in Him, His words and works, His Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, Session as Sovereign at the right hand of God, find the perfect revelation of what God is, the perfect discovery of what man is, the perfect disclosure of what sin is, the perfect prophecy of what man may become, the Light of light, the answer to every question that our spirits can put about the loftiest verities of God and man, the universe and the future. We feed on Christ when, with lowly submission, we habitually subject thoughts, purposes, desires, to His authority, and when we let His will flow into, and make plastic and supple, our wills. We nourish our wills by submitting them to Jesus, and we feed on Him not only when we say "Lord! Lord!" but when we do the things that He says. We feed on Christ, when we let His great, sacred, all-wise, all-giving, all-satisfying love flow into our restless hearts and make them still, enter into our vagrant affections and fix them on Himself.

¶ To feed on Christ is to get His strength into us to be our strength. You feed on the cornfield and the strength of the cornfield comes into you and is your strength. You feed on the cornfield and then go and build your house, and it is the cornfield in your strong arm that builds the house, that cuts down the trees and piles the stones and lifts the roof into its place. You feed on Christ and then go and live your life, and it is Christ in you that lives your life, that helps the poor, that tells the truth, that fights the battle, and that wins the crown.<sup>1</sup>

(2) *Enjoyment*.—In the second place, the word suggests the thought of enjoyment. Our life is to be a feast; that is to say, a season of continuous happy festivity. Not only when we reach that better land, and sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb; not only then are we to be privileged to feast with Him. The feast of heaven begins on earth, and only those who know from their own experience what it is to feast with Jesus now will ever feast with Him yonder.

The Christian is not only to take the doctrines which concern Christ, to build up his soul with them as the body is built up with food, but he may draw from them the wine of joy and the new wine of delight. It is meet that we rejoice in Christ Jesus. He is the bliss of the saints. Is it not ■ joy unspeakable and

<sup>1</sup> Phillips Brooks.



full of glory, that my sin will never be laid to my charge if I believe in Him; that my sin has been laid at His door, and He has put it all away, so that if it be searched for it shall not be found? Is it not an intense delight to believe that Christ has so effectually put away sin that no destroying angel can touch one of His saints? There being no condemnation, there can be no punishment for us either in this world or in that which is to come. We are safe as were the Israelites when the door was sprinkled with the blood. And then, being justified, we rise to a higher position, we are adopted into the family of God, and if children, then heirs. What a vista of glory opens before our eyes at the mention of that word, heirs of God! All things are ours, because Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us.

As if to one who in a dungeon lay,  
Laden with chains, and hidden from the sun,  
For some dark evil deed that he had done,  
For which he must his life a forfeit pay,

Should come a messenger of glad reprieve,  
And lead him out into the sunlight gay,  
Pardoned and free, on some high holiday,  
To joy his trembling heart can scarce conceive;

So in his veins the wine of life should run,  
So should he still rejoicing keep the feast,  
Who is from guilt and fear of death released,  
By the sure promise of the Mighty One,

That, as in Egypt passing Death was fain  
To spare the house where blood he might perceive,  
Sprinkled by those who did the Lord believe,  
So, for us too, our Passover is slain.



THE BODY FOR GOD.

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## THE BODY FOR GOD.

Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost . . . glorify God therefore in your body.—1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

ST. PAUL'S words declare the basis on which all the fabric of specifically Christian civilization stands—the doctrine of the intrinsic sanctity of the body, bought by Christ on the cross, indwelt by the Spirit of God, commissioned to be the instrument of God's glory.

The Apostle is denouncing sins of the flesh. In his eyes these sins are something more than sins. They are flagrant anomalies; they are monstrous wrongs. There is a direct contradiction in terms, a flat denial of the first principles of justice, in the commission of them. God has set His stamp upon us. He impressed us with His image in our first creation. He re-stamped the same image upon us when He formed us anew in Christ. Thus we are doubly His. Here is God enthroned in the sanctuary of your bodies. But you—you ignore the august Presence, you profane the Eternal Majesty; you pollute, you dishonour, you defy, with shameless sacrilege, the ineffable glory, the Lord seated on His throne, high and lifted up, His train filling the whole temple of your being, as if He were some vile and worthless thing.

¶ There is a deep and luminous suggestiveness about St. Paul's characteristic formula, "know ye not?" Some have thought that the Apostle is thus recalling to the memory of his converts specific teachings of his own; but this seems unlikely. Rather he is addressing himself to their elementary Christian instincts, and bringing these into the field against the shallow and demoralizing sophistries, which had for them an attractiveness so strange and so perilous. He would thus cut his way through the thickets of futile argumentation, and bring the whole question at issue into the open, where it could be clearly seen and justly appraised.

The Christian conscience would settle with prompt and peremptory decision matters which would long perplex and mislead the Christian intellect. *Know ye not*, he says, "that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost? . . . glorify God, therefore, in your body."<sup>1</sup>

## I.

### THE BODY.

Of all the visible and tangible wonders of the universe, the human body ranks the first. It is the centre and home of all the sciences. All things, by ministering to it, unanimously consent that it is "head over all." It is the throne of all laws; and comprehends every form. Only let it be added that, for the exquisiteness of its lines, it excels all forms, and surpasses everything that exists, whether in the vegetable or in the animal world. Hence one may pass for a good artist in the representation of mountains, clouds, streams, trees, and cattle; and yet have very little capacity to represent the subtle and delicate lines of the human face. The human face is the triumph of beauty. It is visible, but it expresses the wisdom, love, and grace of the invisible world. It is on the sky-line between the two worlds, where matter and spirit exquisitely blend.

1. Consider the *honour* of the human body.

(1) It is a bit of the *handiwork of God*.—Men of science, whose study is in the forms of life, tell us that in these there is visible a struggle upwards through innumerable forms, but the goal of the struggle is man, the human form Divine. Contrivances which are only experiments lower down in the scale are complete in the human body, and its hundreds of different parts are compacted together into a machine so perfect that it may go sometimes for a hundred years without going wrong. But just as the flowers and plants of Eden were made originally all very good, but required the cultivating hand of Adam, and as plants and many other works of God require human culture in order to bring them to the most complete perfection, so does the body. The body requires cultivation; but is it not a splendid reason for giving it this, to remember that we are fellow-workers with God

<sup>1</sup> H. Hensley Henson.

in so doing, that we are carrying out His ideals and bringing His handiwork to perfection?

¶ In the interests of his intelligence man's mind has been sheathed in a sensitive body. Through the things that he has felt and suffered in his body he has come into the mastery of the things that made him feel and suffer, so that now they do him service. So it is with character. In the interests of his spirit man's soul has been sheathed in his body. It is given him for moral discovery, for the shaping of character. All moral greatness and moral power come first in the form of control of the body. To eat, to drink, to rest, are all of them good, but because each of them may be abused into selfishness and sin, there is moral danger in each of them. We are shaping our moral character, and are determining our moral possibilities, by our use of the body. It is the earliest arena and instrument of the spirit's training. Through the body also men learn to suffer and to be strong, and through suffering to find a farther and a finer moral and spiritual beauty. It is our business to be at our physical best for God's sake—our religious business, for the functions of life are only perfectly performed in health. But it is very easy for us to overrate the physical; and, lest we be betrayed into folly, we may remember that some of the greatest and the noblest men and women have been physical weaklings. To read their story is to understand that through their sufferings and bodily disability, they came into their nobleness, learned to consecrate suffering, and compel it to the holy ministries of spiritual culture. Through the pain and the patience of disabled years they worked out their own salvation.<sup>1</sup>

(2) The body is the indispensable *instrument of the mind*.—The body is not a part of the mind, nor a function of the mind, as some teach in our day. The mind is not inevitably bound up with the body, as we can see by the fact that the most splendid minds have often lodged in the plainest and even the most deformed bodies. The mind is not going to go down in the dissolution of the body, but to survive "the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds," and yet in many respects the mind is dependent on the body. It is through the body that it receives all its knowledge, and it is only through the members of the body that it can act on the outer world. The mind is dependent on the body for its share in all that is done beneath the circuit

<sup>1</sup> T. Yates, *Sculptors of Life*, 106.

of the sun. Neglect of the body or ill-treatment of it may shorten life, or it may debilitate life and make it a burden to its possessor.

¶ We have probably yet to learn how much we owe to those humble, obscure, and too often slighted friends, the senses, whether they be five or seven. Are they indeed only doors and windows, gateways of knowledge, messengers conveying intelligence to some inner, directing power, or are they in themselves as noble, as important, as any other part of man, as necessary to the soul as it is to them? Of one thing I am intimately convinced, that it is to the agency of the senses that man owes many of his sweetest feelings of affection, his loftiest aspirations after excellence. It cannot be doubted that the purest affections of the heart are closely linked with our physical nature, and fed by what ministers to its delight. Those whom we really love are as dear to us in their bodies as they are in their souls; it is to sight, hearing, contact, we greatly owe that irresistible charm which makes the presence of a person we love to be desired by the heart, above all else that life can give it. The sovereign attraction lies in what an old writer calls "the continual comfort of a face," in the sound of a voice, the touch of a hand, so that we may truly say that it is presence, not absence, which is the real test of love, and that affection is better gauged by our feelings about people when we are with them, than by our thoughts about them when we are separated.<sup>1</sup>

(3) The body is the *medium of expression of the soul*.—There are many faces about this world in which prayer and patience and humility have, by God's grace, wrought a beauty which may be the nearest approach that can be seen in this life to the glory of the Resurrection—the glory that is to be revealed in those who shall then be wholly penetrated and transfigured by the Spirit of the Lord. So intimate is the bond between soul and body that it has naturally come to be employed as the very type of immediate union or alliance; and the poet has illustrated that, in a well-known line, when he writes that God is very near to us: "Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet." Indeed every day we see new instances in which, owing to this indissociable connection, the soul has written its own character on the body. We are usually right in judging a man by his facial expression. His nature peeps out in the glance of

<sup>1</sup> Dora Greenwell, *Liber Humanitatis*, 8.



his eye, the touch of his hand, the tone and inflection of his voice, his unstudied and unconscious gestures and attitudes, even the peculiarities of his gait.

¶ "Olalla," I said, "the soul and the body are one, and mostly so in love. What the body chooses, the soul loves; where the body clings, the soul cleaves; body for body, soul to soul, they come together at God's signal; and the lower part (if we can call aught low) is only the footstool and foundation of the highest."<sup>1</sup>

¶ There are times when, all unconsciously to itself, the soul declares what it really is, what is its true nature—its love or hate, esteem or scorn. Perhaps it is some articulate utterance that is the medium of revelation, as when Browning says:—

He replied—

The first word I heard ever from his lips,  
All himself in it—an eternity  
Of speech, to match the immeasurable depth  
O' the soul that then broke silence—"I am yours."

Or, perhaps, the silence remains unbroken, but the disclosure is made, nevertheless, with

Each soul a-strain

Some one way through the flesh—the face, an evidence  
O' the soul at work inside.

When a man has "base ends and speaks falsely, the eye is muddy, and sometimes a-squint." But when his soul is true and pure, "his eye is as clear as the heavens," and his face grows "one luminosity";—though, in the former case, he may never suspect that the question will be put to him, "Why is thy countenance fallen?" And in the latter also it might truthfully be said, He "wist not that the skin of his face shone."<sup>2</sup>

New burnisht Joys!

Which finest Gold and Pearl excell!

Such sacred Treasures are the Limbs of Boys

In which a Soul doth dwell:

Their organized Joints and azure Veins

More Wealth include than the dead World contains.<sup>3</sup>

(4) The body is a *medium of Divine service*.—A large part of our usefulness and influence is due to passing bodily changes, of which we may be unconscious, but which others feel. Our eyes

<sup>1</sup> R. L. Stevenson, *Olalla*.

<sup>2</sup> J. Flew, *Studies in Browning*, 94.

<sup>3</sup> Traherne, *Poems of Felicity*, 2.

brighten with the good news we have to tell; our face beams with a smile; "there's music in our very foot" when we are on an errand of love. When one "lifts" on us "the light of his countenance" we learn the sacred service of the body. Love and joy, hope and fear, pleading earnestness, remonstrant indignation—all the deep emotions of spiritual life lay the body under tribute. Think of the power of the orator in glance and gesture as well as in word; think of the dear faces and the musical voices of a happy household; think of beauty of expression, lovely when it animates fair features, but infinitely more touching when it glorifies a plain face. These are but casual illustrations of the various ways in which the body lends itself to the divinest ministries of life.

¶ Charles Kingsley once said, "There has always seemed to me something impious in the neglect of personal health. I could not do half the good I do, if it were not for the strength and activity some consider coarse and degrading."

¶ One personal characteristic of Bishop Wilkinson stands out very strongly all through his life—the exquisite sensitiveness and delicacy of his bodily frame. He was not a man who could rough it; he was singularly dependent upon rest, upon the refined appointments of life; his house, his dress, his apparatus were always those of a wealthy and almost aristocratic fine gentleman. I think he showed his greatness and his simplicity by not troubling about this, and accepting these as the conditions under which he could do his work best; he did not plan for them or set any affected value upon them—he was simply unconscious of them, while they somehow enhanced his mysterious grace, and showed how the arts of courtly living and the pomps and vanities of the world may be consecrated to the service of God.<sup>1</sup>

(5) Remember also the *prospects* of the body. The body has its own real share in the hopes and promises that cluster round the name of Jesus. The heathen said—our modern heathen say still—the body will perish like the animals; what matters it how we treat it? Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. Nay, replies Christian faith, there is a second and nobler chapter in the story even of this frail tenement we here inhabit, which sheds back its light upon the chapter we are living in now. God, who raised up Jesus, shall in due time also quicken your mortal bodies.

<sup>1</sup> A. C. Benson, *The Leaves of the Tree*, 129.

2. Consider the *dishonour* of the body.

(1) It has an inevitable tendency to *usurp the place of the soul*.—The body is always trying to slip this domination of the powers that are above it, and become uppermost, and if this is allowed to take place the whole life is turned upside down, and man is degraded.

(2) The body has *propensities which, if unduly indulged, waste and ruin life*.—Where lies the gravity and guilt of sins like gluttony, intemperance, or lust in any form? In this, for one thing, that they give the body the upper hand. The only right and safe thing is that the body shall always serve. Any attempt to reverse the Divine law of our nature, that that part of us which is akin to God must rule, means a loss of true manhood and inevitable suffering. The drunkard reeling down the street is, in too many cases, a man whose body has already become the grave of a lost spirit.

¶ The sovereignty of the conscience, and the control of reason, and the force of will exist in us to control appetite. The horse, when it is held in with a firm hand in a tight rein, is a noble sight, but if the rider or driver lets the rein slip from his fingers, the very mettle and force of the brute are what lead to destruction. And so the very frailty of the body becomes the means of greater destruction unless it is held in by the superior faculties of our nature.<sup>1</sup>

## II.

### THE TEMPLE OF THE BODY.

Under the Old Dispensation of Law, God had a temple for His people, but under the New Dispensation of Grace, He has His people for a temple.

1. The Temple was the one place in all the land of Israel which was *entirely dedicated to God's use*. It existed solely for His service, and from all secular purposes and work it was completely separated. God's ownership was recognized in every detail of its construction and service—it was truly the House of God. So is it with all those who are called now to be His temples.

¶ I remember once learning, as I was standing in the magnifi-

<sup>1</sup> J. Stalker.

cent Cathedral at Cologne, that Napoleon had stabled his cavalry horses in its chapel, and the very thought seemed to darken and profane the whole place. Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and if any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy.<sup>1</sup>

2. The Temple thus dedicated to God was *handed over to His possession* in that wonderful prayer of Solomon. The body of a Christian believer holds another tenant than his human spirit; a Divine presence is within him, at once his glory and his power. And that Divine presence confers an unutterable sacredness upon his body. Just as he who commits sacrilege not only desecrates the material fabric, but also dishonours the God whose shrine it is; as he who performs unseemly acts in a temple not only defiles the stones and buildings, and wounds the spirits of the worshippers, but also profanes the worship of the Deity: so he who injures his body offends the Holy Ghost; he who sins against his body, not only degrades himself, but is a transgressor against the indwelling God.

¶ They who sin against the body defile their temple, and dishonour Him who dwells in them. Some do so from an excessive devotion to the cares of this life, which, however necessary they may be to give practical directness and homely reality to spiritual character, are sure to exhaust him who lives wholly or even mainly in and for them. Some do it by an undue addiction to social excitements, which are to the intellect and imagination what stimulants are to the appetites. How many strong men, men of practical genius and large common sense; how many genial-spirited men, with rare gifts of sympathy and social qualities, are lost to the labours of our churches from these causes!<sup>2</sup>

3. The Temple offered to God became His indeed by *His acceptance of the offering*.—This was sealed by fire from heaven and by the glory of the Lord filling the house (2 Chron. vii. 1). Henceforth, in a peculiar sense, that place became God's dwelling-place, and a type for all time of the spiritual temples which He purposes that all His people should be. No mere emotion, no strength of resolution, no strenuous striving to live aright, can ever take the place of God Himself in His people. This is the secret which alone transforms, "We will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John xiv. 23).

<sup>1</sup> J. Stalker.

<sup>2</sup> A. Mackennal.

4. The Temple thus possessed and indwelt by God became the *sphere of His manifestation* to man, and from thence they learned His law and received His blessing through ordinance and sacrifice. And thus it is with "the Temples of the Spirit" even now. They are the media through whom He chooses to manifest Himself to the world, and their lives in the power of His indwelling are set for the life and light of men. Holiness is in itself not an end, but a means to an end, the end being the blessing of others through our lives and labour. Any conception less than this degrades holiness to the level of refined selfishness, and dishonours Him whose name we bear. The "Temples of God" are not self-contained but Christ-communicating, and each by virtue of its existence as such is a centre of unmeasured blessing to the world.

Not in the world of light alone,  
Where God has built His blazing throne,  
Nor yet alone in earth below,  
With belted seas that come and go,  
And endless isles of sunlit green,  
Is all thy Maker's glory seen:  
Look in upon thy wondrous frame—  
Eternal wisdom still the same!

The smooth, soft air with pulse-like waves  
Flows murmuring through its hidden caves,  
Whose streams of brightening purple rush,  
Fired with a new and livelier blush,  
While all their burden of decay  
The ebbing current steals away,  
And red with Nature's flame they start  
From the warm fountains of the heart.

No rest that throbbing slave may ask,  
For ever quivering o'er his task,  
While far and wide a crimson jet  
Leaps forth to fill the woven net  
Which in unnumbered crossing tides  
The flood of burning life divides,  
Then, kindling each decaying part,  
Creeps back to find the throbbing heart.

But warmed with that unchanging flame  
Behold the outward moving frame,

## THE BODY FOR GOD

Its living marbles jointed strong  
 With glistening band and silvery thong,  
 And linked to reason's guiding reins  
 By myriad rings in trembling chains,  
 Each graven with the threaded zone  
 Which claims it as the master's own.

See how yon beam of seeming white  
 Is braided out of seven-hued light,  
 Yet in those lucid globes no ray  
 By any chance shall break astray.  
 Hark how the rolling surge of sound,  
 Arches and spirals circling round,  
 Wakes the hushed spirit through thine ear  
 With music it is heaven to hear.

Then mark the cloven sphere that holds  
 All thought in its mysterious folds,  
 That feels sensation's faintest thrill,  
 And flashes forth the sovereign will;  
 Think on the stormy world that dwells  
 Locked in its dim and clustering cells!  
 The lightning gleams of power it sheds  
 Along its hollow glassy threads!

O Father! grant Thy love divine  
 To make these mystic temples Thine!  
 When wasting age and wearying strife  
 Have sapped the leaning walls of life,  
 When darkness gathers over all,  
 And the last tottering pillars fall,  
 Take the poor dust Thy mercy warms,  
 And mould it into heavenly forms!<sup>1</sup>

## III.

## THE GLORY OF GOD IN THE BODY.

1. "Glorify God, therefore, in your body." Do not let us mar the directness of this appeal by imitating the timidity of those later interpreters who read, "Glorify God in your body and in your spirit." There is but one problem in human life, and that is the problem of the body, the organ through which alone life manifests itself, the home of our activities, the seat of our desires.

<sup>1</sup> Oliver Wendell Holmes, *The Living Temple*.



"Glorify God in your body" was the straight appeal of one who knew what it was to stand fast in the liberty with which Christ had made him free.

¶ "Ye are not your own," that is the premise; "therefore glorify God in your body," that is the conclusion. Between premise and conclusion is builded Calvary. Before God's "therefore" stands a blood-stained cross and on it hangs the Son of God. If we are God's, all that we own is His. If He owns us, He owns our property. He allows us to own it, that He may control it. If one owns a piece of ground, he owns the grass that grows on it. If God owns us, we are to glorify Him with all that we own. What we are to give Him is to depend, not on our whims and moods, not on what we think we can spare, but on what it takes to glorify Him. He is to have not what we like, but what He likes. This is the kind of ownership of property society needs to have recognized; not the public, collective ownership of land and capital for which socialism is shrieking; but the Divine ownership of property whose right rests on the claims of creation and redemption.<sup>1</sup>

¶ We do not want to have our life divided up into body and spirit, secular and sacred, week-day and Sunday. The devil likes to keep us talking about what we ought not to do on Sunday morning, because none knows better than he that our destinies are really determined by what we do on Saturday night. A few reserves which are labelled "sacred" are the best guarantee that Beelzebub can have for undisturbed possession of the character. "Give me the body" is the cry of every claimant for the citadel of Mansoul, "and let who will have the spirit."<sup>2</sup>

2. "To glorify" God is to do Him honour, to exalt, to magnify, to praise Him. How can we glorify God in our bodies?

(1) We glorify God in our bodies by a clear, direct recognition that the body is His shrine, His temple. "Now the body," says St. Paul, "is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." This implies a strenuous mental rally back to elemental principles whenever the body presumes to make its imperious demands. It implies certain times of soul-quietude when we affirm, with strong conviction, "I am a manifestation of God. My body is His shrine, His temple, the theatre of His operation. If my body beguiles me into lust, anger, selfishness, unkindness to others, I am not merely making myself an objec-

<sup>1</sup> J. I. Vance, *Tendency*, 88.

<sup>2</sup> Canon J. G. Simpson.

tionable nuisance, but I am guilty of sacrilege, of something akin to blasphemy against the God who dwells within me."

(2) We glorify God in our bodies by disciplining the body so that we gain the victory of self-possession. By far the best, the surest, the happiest, verification of St. Paul's great claim must be made by each man for himself in the effort of obedience; in the hidden discipline of life; through pain and toil and fear, it may be, yet, by the grace of God, not without some earnest of a victory whose faintest, briefest forecast is better than all the pleasures of compromise—the victory of self-possession for the glory of God. It is pitiful to imagine how much of strength and liberty and joy is being missed or marred day after day by the mistakes men make in dealing with their bodies. Quite apart from the misery and havoc wrought by sheer misuse—by gluttony and drunkenness and lust—there are misunderstandings of the body's meaning, and one-sided ways of treating it, which, with little or no blame perhaps, still hinder grievously the worth and happiness that life might have, and that the love of God intended for it.

(a) *The body is not to be neglected or despised.*—In former times it was the belief of men that they honoured God by punishing the flesh. If one man were more saintly than another he would wear a hair shirt next his skin, or put round his body a belt with spikes in it. Long and rigorous fasts, great and serious privations, were thought to be special marks of religious sanctity. Are we quite free from this error? Have not we cared more for souls than bodies? We have sometimes been so busy "saving souls" that we have cared next to nothing for bodies.

¶ It seems to me that the spurious and unspiritual feeling of the day is directed to spiritual even more frequently than to material objects; and above all, that to divorce from each other a care for men's bodies and for their spirits, or under any pretence whatever to cast a slight upon the former, or even upon those who exclusively (at least as they fancy) devote themselves to the former, is to set at naught the first and last lessons of the Gospels. It would be utterly shocking to me to doubt that the plainest and most literal meaning of such passages as Matt. xv. 32, Mark viii. 2, 3 is also the most important, whatever other meanings may likewise be contained within them.<sup>1</sup>

¶ The great German tenor, Herr Heinrich Knote, once showed

<sup>1</sup> Hort, *Life and Letters*, i. 405.

me his mirrors for examining the vocal chords. The first thing he does after waking is to see whether the vocal chords have the fine pink hue that indicates perfect health. And a red and inflamed vein means that something is wrong. His whole art is so to carry on the functions of digestion, exercise, sleep, work and play as to keep his body at the point of absolute perfection. The time was when men talked about despising the body. People wanted the moral teacher to have the student's pallor and to show those signs of exhaustion that betoken the midnight oil. We have finally discovered that sickness is not saintliness. Holiness is wholeness, or healthiness—to use the Hebrew expression. God made the body to be a fearful and wonderful instrument, and a man who injures his body and by carelessness and sin appears on the street with a bad cold or indigestion, or shows signs of gluttony, ought to be as humiliated as if he had been caught stealing chickens, forging a note, or telling lies. Sickness that comes from disobedience to the laws of God represents a form of personal degradation.<sup>1</sup>

¶ Behold: eating, drinking, clothing, and other necessities pertaining to the support of the body are burdensome to a fervent spirit.

Grant me to use such comforts with moderation, and not to be entangled with an excessive longing for them. It is not allowed us to cast them all away, for nature must be supported; but Thy holy law forbids to require superfluities and such things as are for mere delight; for otherwise the flesh would grow insolent against the spirit.

Between these, I beseech Thee, let Thy hand govern and direct me, that nothing be done in excess.<sup>2</sup>

(b) *The body is not to be indulged.*—Modern civilization addresses an ever more powerful and persuasive appeal to the lower appetites of man. The cravings of the senses are stimulated in many ways, and a wonderful organization of sensual service has been developed to satisfy them. The body is an instrument for making money, and the patient servitor of sensual pleasure, and for many nothing more.

(3) We glorify God in our bodies by trusting the love and power and resources of the Father-Soul who dwells within us. Our want of faith limits God. They who are able to concentrate upon the central fountain of life, and affirm that all that is God's

<sup>1</sup> N. D. Hillis, *Contagion of Influence*, 205.

<sup>2</sup> À Kempis.

is theirs, do find the lower conditions controlled; the moral conditions of the psychical nature, and the physical conditions of the animal nature, are practically dead because they are "hid with Christ in God."

¶ One of the finest organs in Europe is in the Cathedral of Fribourg, a town in Switzerland. A good many years ago a young man came to that Cathedral and asked to be allowed to examine the organ. The attendant, not knowing who he was, at first refused to permit him to do so. After considerable persuasion he suffered him to look through it, and then in response to further persistent entreaty he allowed him to sit down and attempt to play. Forthwith there burst from the great instrument such strains of heavenly music that the attendant stood spellbound. "Who are you?" at last he ventured to ask. "My name is Mendelssohn," was the reply. "Mendelssohn!" cried the attendant, lifting up his hands in amazement, "and to think that I refused to let you play on the organ!" There is One who wishes to bring music to the glory of God out of our lives, if we will only allow Him. Let Christ touch us, and we will be able to glorify God.<sup>1</sup>

(4) To glorify God in the body is manifestly self-identification with the brethren of humanity. "If you would glorify God in your body, know that the humility that loves to serve, the self-subordination that induces you to leave your heaven of personal comfort to be identified with your brethren's sorrows, will propitiate the only element in the nature of the Absolute that requires propitiating, which is His yearning, hungering love." God's human children need us all, bitterly need us.

King's children are these all; though want and sin  
Have marred their beauty glorious within,  
We may not pass them but with reverent eye;  
As when we see some goodly temple graced  
To be Thy dwelling, ruined and defaced,  
The haunt of sad and doleful creatures, lie  
Bare to the sky, and open to the gust,  
It grieveth us to see this House laid waste,  
It pitieth us to see it in the dust!<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. Aitchison.

<sup>2</sup> Dora Greenwell.

## SPIRITUAL DETACHMENT.

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## SPIRITUAL DETACHMENT.

But this I say, brethren, the time is shortened, that henceforth both those that have wives may be as though they had none; and those that weep, as though they wept not; and those that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and those that buy, as though they possessed not; and those that use the world as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.—1 Cor. vii. 29-31.

THE subject of this chapter is marriage. But marriage is part of a larger subject. The great question agitating the Corinthians is whether a man should, on becoming a Christian, maintain the occupations and relationships which he entered into previously. The Apostle's answer is, Yes: "Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called." Let the slave remain a slave, though he may take advantage of an honourable opportunity of becoming free. Let those who are married remain married, and those who are unmarried remain unmarried. "But this I say"—there is a change of word (from λέγω to φημί), in order probably to give special emphasis to the assertion—"But this I do declare: though I counsel none to change their state, I counsel all to change their attitude towards these and all other earthly things."

And what are the earthly interests towards which Christian men are to change their attitude? He names marriage, weeping, rejoicing, buying, and the use of the world generally. But how is this possible? Because the time is short—literally "is shortened, abridged"—there is no very long time now for any one to feel the duty of detachment irksome. And finally there is wisdom in it, for this world is neither essential nor enduring—"the fashion of this world passeth away."

Thus the subject is detachment from the world. There is mentioned—

- I. An Encouragement to Detachment.
- II. Three Relationships of life towards which the Detachment may be practised :—
  - 1. Marriage.
  - 2. Sorrowing and Rejoicing.
  - 3. Business.
- III. A general Direction regarding the proper Attitude to the World.
- IV. A good Reason for this Attitude.

¶ Christianity is a spirit, not a law; it is a set of principles, not a set of rules; it is not a saying to us, You shall do this, you shall not do that—you shall use this particular dress, you shall not use that—you shall lead, you shall not lead, a married life. Christianity consists of principles, but the application of those principles is left to every man's individual conscience. With respect not only to this particular case, but to all the questions which had been brought before him, the Apostle applies the same principle; the cases upon which he decided were many and various, but the large, broad principle of his decision remains the same in all. You may marry, and you have not sinned: you may remain unmarried, and you do not sin; if you are invited to a heathen feast, you may go, or you may abstain from going; you may remain a slave, or you may become free; not in these things does Christianity consist. But what it does demand is this: whether married or unmarried, whether a slave or free, in sorrow or in joy, you are to live in a spirit higher and loftier than that of the world.<sup>1</sup>

## I.

### AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO DETACHMENT.

“The time is shortened.”

1. There is no tremor of dismay or sadness in the voice. St. Paul was in the midst of work, full of the interest and joy of living, holding the reins of many complicated labours in his hands, and he quietly said, “This is not going to last long. Very soon it will be over.” It is what men often say to themselves with terror, clutching all the more closely the things which they hold, as if they would hold on to them for ever. There is nothing of

<sup>1</sup> F. W. Robertson.

that about St. Paul. And on the other hand, there is nothing of morbidness or discontent, no rejoicing that the time is short, and wishing that it were still shorter. There is no hatred of life which makes him want to be away. There is no mad impatience for the things which lie beyond. There is simply a calm and satisfied recognition of a fact. There is a reasonable sense of what is good and dear in life, and yet, at the same time, of what must lie beyond life, of what life cannot give us. It is as when the same pen wrote those sublime and simple words, "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality"; the quiet statement of a great, eternal necessity, at which the wise man must feel the same kind of serious joy as that with which he follows the movements of the stars, and looks to see day and night inevitably give place to one another.

2. It does not matter what St. Paul was thinking of when he said the time was short. He may have had his mind upon the death which they were all approaching. He may have thought of the coming of Christ, which he seems to have expected to take place while he was yet alive. We cannot be quite certain which it was. And perhaps the very vagueness about this helps us to his meaning. For he is not, evidently, dwelling upon the nature of the event which is to limit the "time," only upon the simple fact that there is a limit; that the period of earthly life and work lies like an island in the midst of a greater sea of being, the island of time in the ocean of a timeless eternity; and that it is pressed upon and crowded into littleness by the infinite. Not the shore where the sea sets the island its limits, but only the island in the sea, hearing the sea always on its shores; not the experience by which this life should pass into another, but only the compression and intensifying of this life by the certainty that there is another; not death, but the shortness of life—that is what his thoughts are fixed upon, and it is of this that the best men always think the most.

3. Time is short in reference to two things.

(1) First, it is short *in reference to the person who regards it*.—That mysterious thing Time is a matter of sensation, and not a reality; a modification merely of our own consciousness, and not actual existence; depending upon the flight of ideas—long

to one, short to another. The span granted to the butterfly, the child of a single summer, may be long; that which is given to the cedar of Lebanon may be short. The shortness of time, therefore, is entirely relative, belonging to us, not to God.

¶ In poetry and ordinary talk, we are obliged to look at time as an agent in itself; but in reality time does nothing and is nothing; we use it as an easy familiar expression for all those causes which are working slowly, and which we cannot see. Unless some positive cause is in action, no change takes place even in a thousand years. There are probably empty regions in the universe where no light comes, and nothing occurs; in such places there can be no time. It is simply that we are here, and that things are happening around us. The earth has gone a certain course round the sun, and brought us again to the same point where we were twelve months ago. We have for 365 days been careering through different parts of space. That is the meaning of a year. We are only allowed to join in the career, and to come back to the same point a certain number of repetitions in our lives—the same point, I mean, in reference to the solar system; but the solar system itself is moving onward through space. During each period, certain causes are leading either to the completion, the maintenance, or the decay of our bodies; and after we have spun round with our little globe for some 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, or at the most 100 circuits, then comes the end. We can see no further. Others take our place, and we are what is called dead.<sup>1</sup>

¶ There is a little insect that crawls upon the trees, and creeps, in one short day of ours, through all the experiences of life from birth to death. In a short twenty-four hours his life begins, matures and ends—birth, youth, activity, age, decrepitude, all crowded and compressed into these moments that slip away uncounted in one day of our human life. Is his life long or short? Is our life long or short to him? If he could realize it by any struggle of his insect brain, what an eternity our three-score years and ten must seem to him! And then lift up your eyes, lift up your thoughts, and think of God. How does the life that has any limits appear to Him? Nothing short of eternity can seem long to Him. He sees the infant's life flash like a ripple into the sunlight of existence and vanish almost before the eye has caught it. And He sees Methuselah's slow existence creep through its nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and find, at last, the grave which had stood waiting so long. Is there a real

<sup>1</sup> W. M. Sinclair, *A Young Man's Life*, 126.

difference in the length of these two lives to Him? A little longer ripple is the life of the patriarch than was the life of the baby, that is all. What do we mean, then, by the shortness of our human life? To the ephemera it looks like an eternity; to God it looks like an instant. Evidently these attributes of length and shortness must be relative; they are not absolute.<sup>1</sup>

¶ An illusion haunts us, that a long duration, as a year, a decade, a century, is valuable. But an old French sentence says, "God works in moments"—"En peu d'heure Dieu labeure." We ask for long life, but 'tis deep life, or grand moments that signify. Let the measure of Time be spiritual, not mechanical. Life is unnecessarily long. Moments of insight, of fine personal relation, a smile, a glance—what ample borrowers of eternity they are!<sup>2</sup>

(2) Again, time is short *with reference to its opportunities*.—For this is the emphatic meaning in the original—literally, "the opportunity is compressed, or shut in." Time may be long, and yet the opportunity may be very short. The sun in autumn may be bright and clear, but the seed which has not been sown until then will not vegetate. A man may have vigour and energy in manhood and maturity, but the work which ought to have been done in childhood and youth cannot be done in old age. A chance once gone in this world can never be recovered.

¶ An Italian superstition of the Middle Ages engaged with wonderful success the pencil of Watts while he was sojourning in Florence, and in it he who had been the pupil of Phidias in the study of the Elgin marbles at home, became the worshipper of Tintoretto in Italy. The Fata Morgana which Boiardo in his Orlando Innamorato imagined as a siren, fleeing from the pursuit of a knight, he embodies with a singular deftness. She is depicted as having reached a thicket of dense foliage, and the knight has almost grasped the hem of her crimson robe when she flees still further from him with a mischievous glance which mocks all his eager efforts. It was a superstitious notion among the Italian peasants that this mystic being could only be effectually caught by having the lock of her forehead seized with a firm grasp. What is this but virtually saying in finer form, what time, and every opportunity which it brings, is preaching to us in loud tones—to seize it by the forelock and hold it fast, otherwise it will escape and we shall lose it for ever?<sup>3</sup>

¶ Iron passes into the furnace cold and unyielding; coming

<sup>1</sup> Phillips Brooks.

<sup>2</sup> Emerson.

<sup>3</sup> H. Macmillan, *The Life-Work of George Frederick Watts*, 171.



out it quickly cools and refuses the mould; but midway is a moment when fire so lends itself to iron, and iron so yields its force to flame that the metal flows like water. This brief plastic moment is the inventor's opportunity, when the metal will take on any shape for use or beauty. Similarly the fields offer a strategic time to the husbandman. In February the soil refuses the plough, the sun refuses heat, the sky refuses rain, the seed refuses growth. In May comes an opportune time when all forces conspire towards harvests; then the sun lends warmth, the clouds lend rain, the air lends ardour, the soil lends juices. Then must the sower go forth and sow, for nature whispers that if he neglects June he will starve in January. The planets also lend interpretation to this principle. Years ago astronomers were sent to Africa to witness the transit of Venus. Preparations began months beforehand. A ship was fitted up, instruments were packed, the ocean was crossed, a site selected, and the telescopes were mounted. Scientists made all things ready for that opportune time when the sun, Venus, and the earth should all be in line. That critical moment was very brief. Instinctively each astronomer knew that his eye must be at the small end of the glass when the planet went scudding past the large end. Once the period of conjunction had passed no machinery would offer itself for turning the planet back upon her axis. Not for astronomers only are the opportune times brief.<sup>1</sup>

When I have time, so many things I'll do,  
 To make life happier and more fair  
 For those whose lives are crowded now with care,  
 I'll help to lift them from their low despair  
     When I have time.

When I have time, the friend I love so well  
 Shall know no more the weary, toiling days;  
 I'll lead his feet in pleasant paths always,  
 And cheer his heart with words of sweetest praise,  
     When I have time.

When you have time! The friend you hold so dear  
 May be beyond the reach of all your sweet intent,  
 May never know that you so kindly meant  
 To fill his life with bright content,  
     When you had time.

<sup>1</sup> N. D. Hillis, *The Investment of Influence*, 220.



Now is the time! Speed, friend, no longer wait  
 To scatter loving smiles and words of cheer  
 To those around, whose lives are now so drear;  
 They may not need you in that far-off year:  
 Now is the time.

4. What effect ought the shortness of the time to have on a man?

(1) *It should make him discriminate.*—Out of the mass of things which we have touched, we must choose those which are ours—the books which we shall read, the men whom we shall know, the power that we shall wield, the pleasure which we shall enjoy, the special point where we shall drop our bit of usefulness into the world's life before we go. We come to be like a party of travellers left at a great city railway station for a couple of hours. All cannot see everything in town. Each has to choose according to his tastes what he will see. They separate into their individualities instead of going wandering about promiscuously, as they would if there were no limit to their time. So conscientiousness, self-knowledge, independence, and the toleration of other men's freedom which always goes with the most serious and deep assertion of our own freedom, are closely connected with the sense that life is very short.

¶ When Dr. Chalmers was a young man, he was for a time more devoted to the study of mathematics than to the subjects which more properly should have concerned him as a parish minister. In a pamphlet which he wrote at the time in support of his application to be appointed to a mathematical chair in the University of Edinburgh, he affirmed that a minister could do all he needed to do in his parish, and do it well, and yet have five clear days every week for literary or other pursuits. Twenty years afterwards some one, who had found a copy of the old forgotten pamphlet, publicly taunted him with what he had said. Yes, he said, it was too true. "I was at that time unduly devoted to the study of mathematics. What, sir, is the object of mathematical science? Magnitude and the proportions of magnitude. But then, strangely blinded that I was, I had forgotten two magnitudes. I thought nothing of the littleness of time and the greatness of eternity."<sup>1</sup>

¶ In a letter to his old schoolmaster Ruskin wrote as follows: "Nero's choice of time and opportunity for the pursuit of his

<sup>1</sup> *The Morning Watch*, Dec. 1902, p. 134.

musical studies has been much execrated, but is guiltless in comparison to the conduct of the man who occupies himself for a single hour with any earthly pursuit of whatever importance, believing, as he must, if he believe the Bible, that souls, which human exertion might save, are meanwhile dropping minute by minute into hell. This being fully granted, the questions come, 'What means are there by which the salvation of souls can be attained?' and 'How are we to choose among them?' For instance, does the pursuit of any art or science, for the mere sake of the resultant beauty or knowledge, tend to forward this end? That such pursuits are beneficial and ennobling to our nature is self-evident, but have we leisure for them in our perilous circumstances? Is it a time to be spelling of letters, or touching of strings, counting stars or crystallizing dewdrops, while the earth is failing under our feet, and our fellows are departing every instant into eternal pain? Or, on the other hand, is not the character and kind of intellect which is likely to be drawn into these occupations employed in the fullest measure and to the best advantage in them? Would not great part of it be useless and inactive if otherwise directed? Do not the results of its labour remain, exercising an influence, if not directly spiritual, yet ennobling and purifying, on all humanity, to all time? Was not the energy of Galileo, Newton, Davy, Michael Angelo, Raphael, Handel, employed more effectively to the glory of God in the results and lessons it has left than if it had been occupied all their lifetime in direct priestly exertion, for which, in all probability, it was less adapted, and in which it would have been comparatively less effectual? Is an individual, then, who has the power of choice, in any degree to yield to his predilections in so important a matter? I myself have little pleasure in the idea of entering the Church, and have been attached to the pursuits of art and science, not by a flying fancy, but as long as I can remember, with settled and steady desire. How far am I justified in following them up?" What answer was sent by Canon Dale to assist his pupil in resolving the doubt between these conflicting calls, I do not know; but Ruskin's own answer to it is written large in his life and work. He made the critic's chair a pulpit.<sup>1</sup>

(2) *It should make him concentrate.*—He who knows he is in the world for a very little while, who knows it and feels it, is not like a man who is to live here for ever. He strikes for the centre of living. He cares for the principles and not for the

<sup>1</sup> E. T. Cook, *The Life of Ruskin* i. 122.

forms of life. He does the little daily things of life, but he does them for their purposes, not for themselves. He is like a climber on a rocky pathway, who sets his foot upon each projecting point of stone, but who treads on each, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the ones above it. The man who knows he is to die to-morrow does all the acts of to-day, but does them as if he did not do them, does them freely, cannot be a slave to their details, has entered already into something of the large liberty of death. That is the way in which the sense that life is short liberates a man from the slavery of details. You say, perhaps, "That is not good. No man can do his work well unless his heart is in it." But is it not also true that a man's heart can really be only in the heart of his work, and that the most conscientious faithfulness in details will always belong, not to the man who serves the details, but to the man who serves the idea of the work which he has to do?

¶ Michael Faraday, when a poor apprentice, utilized every moment, and in a letter to a boy friend he wrote: "Time is all I require. Oh, that I could purchase at a cheap rate some of our modern gents' spare hours—nay, days! I think it would be a good bargain both for them and for me."<sup>1</sup>

O gentlemen! the time of life is short;  
To spend that shortness basely were too long,  
If life did ride upon a dial's point,  
Still ending at the arrival of an hour.<sup>2</sup>

(3) *It should make him realize.*—Every emotion has its higher and its lower forms. It means but little to me if I know only that a man is happy or unhappy, if I do not know of what sort his joy or sorrow is. But all the emotions are certainly tempted to larger action if it is realized that the world in which they take their birth is but for a little time, that its fashion passes away, that the circumstances of an experience are very transitory. That must drive me down into the very essence of every experience and make me realize it in the profoundest and largest way. Take, for instance, one experience. Think of deep sorrow coming to a man, something which breaks his home and heart by taking suddenly, or slowly, out of them that which is the centre of

<sup>1</sup> G. C. Lorimer, *Messages of To-day*, 355.

<sup>2</sup> Shakespeare, *Henry IV.*, pt. i. v. ii. 82.

them both, some life around which all his life has lived. There are two forms in which the sorrow of that death comes to a man. One is in the change of circumstances, the breaking up of sweet companionships and pleasant habits, the loneliness and weariness of living; the other is in the solemn brooding of mystery over the soul and the tumult of love within the soul, the mystery of death, the distress of love. Now if the man who is bereaved sees nothing in the distance, as he looks forward, but one stretch of living, if he realizes most how long life is, it is the first of these aspects of his sorrow that is the most real to him. He multiplies the circumstances of his bereavement into all these coming years. Year after year, year after year, he is to live alone. But if, as it so often happens when death comes very near to us, life seems a very little thing; if, as we stand and watch when the spirit has gone away from earth to heaven, the years of earth which we have yet to live seem very few and short; if it seems but a very little time before we shall go too, then our grief is exalted to its largest form. It grows unselfish. It is perfectly consistent with a triumphant thankfulness for the dear soul that has entered into rest and glory. It dwells not on the circumstances of bereavement, but upon that mysterious strain in which love has been stretched from this world to the other, and, amid all the pain that the tension brings, is still aware of joy at the new knowledge of its own capacities which has been given it.

¶ A truth is not true until it is realized. I know that a battle was fought and won; the mother whose only son appears in the list of the dead realizes it. A man is saved not by what he holds, but by what holds him. I believe in God. So did Antipas. So do you. Who would contradict this? We are all theists. We all believe in God. And yet any man who realized the awfully solemn and truly blessed meaning of this would live as in a temple. This world is the temple of God. And though somewhere and somehow we are in the thrice holy place we are never beyond its outer courts.<sup>1</sup>

(4) *It should solemnize him.*—It is not so much that the shortness of life makes us prepare for death as that it spreads the feeling of criticalness all through life, and makes each moment

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Goodman, *The Lordship of Christ*, 236.

prepare for the next, makes life prepare for life. This is its power. Blessed is he who feels it. Blessed is he in whose experience each day and each hour has all the happiness and all the solemnity of a parent towards the day and the hour to which it gives birth, stands sponsor for it, holds it for baptism at the font of God. Such days are sacred in each other's eyes. The life in which such days succeed each other is as a holy family, with its moments "bound each to each by natural piety."

The bell strikes one. We take no note of Time  
 But from its loss. To give it then a tongue  
 Is wise in man; as if an angel spoke  
 I feel the solemn sound. If heard aright  
 It is the knell of my departed hours:—  
 Where are they? With the years beyond the flood.  
 It is the signal that demands despatch:  
 How much is to be done! My hopes and fears  
 Stand up alarmed, and o'er life's narrow verge  
 Look down—on what? a fathomless abyss;  
 A dread eternity! how surely mine!<sup>1</sup>

(5) *It should make him sympathize.*—Two men have lived side by side for years, with business and social life between them, with a multitude of suspicions and concealments; but let them know that they have only an hour more to live together, and, as they look into each other's eyes, do not the suspicions and concealments clear away? They know each other. They trust each other. They think the best of each other. They are ready to do all that they can do for each other in those few moments that remain.

¶ A traveller was crossing a mountain path alone. The snow was falling fast and thick, and an overpowering sense of sleep stole over him. Desperately he fought against it, for he knew that sleep was certain death. As he struggled on, dragging his tottering steps with increasing difficulty, his foot struck against an obstruction which lay across his path, and looking down to see what it was he found it was a man half buried in the snow. In a moment he forgot his drowsiness and was wide awake. He took the unconscious man in his arms and chafed his frozen body, and in so doing the effort to help another brought life and energy to himself.

<sup>1</sup> Young.



¶ A missionary describes a scene which he saw in South Africa. From the top of a hill he looked down upon a piece of land where a few men were busy sowing peas, and he recognized them to be lepers at work together. Two particularly caught his attention. One had no hands, the other no feet, for their limbs were wasted away by that terrible and loathsome scourge. By themselves they would both alike have been unable to work, but they had overcome their helplessness by mutual help and association. The man who was without hands was bearing on his back the other who had no feet, and he in turn carried the bag of seeds, which he dropped into the ground as they moved along, while his companion pressed each seed into the ground with his feet.<sup>1</sup>

The time is short;  
Therefore with all thy might,  
Labour for God and Right.  
Pause not for heats and shadows of the day,  
Fail not for difficulties of the way:  
Be true, be pure, be strong!  
Eternity is long.

The time is short;  
Sin, misery, and despair  
Darken the earth and air;  
Therefore do thou with Heaven intercede,  
And for thy brethren, ere they perish, plead:  
Pray for the prayerless throng!  
Eternity is long.

The time is short;  
Therefore, my brother, love!  
Love always! God above  
Is one with thee in this; O take  
His crown of thorns, and thine own self forsake!  
Love, spite of pain and wrong!  
Eternity is long.<sup>2</sup>

## II.

### IN THREE RELATIONSHIPS.

There are many who have the impression that the tendency of religion, if a man is sincere and deep in it, is to make him less competent and practical in the affairs of the present. But this

<sup>1</sup> C. J. Ridgeway, *Social Life*, 63.

<sup>2</sup> Shirley Wynne.



cannot be the Apostle's meaning. He was too sane, too wise a man—to claim no more for him—to teach such a way of regarding the business and necessities of the present life. And indeed this was not St. Paul's idea of religion at all. St. Paul's doctrine is the doctrine which is taught all through the Bible, that the family, society, the state, business are of God's ordaining, and that it is of supreme importance that man should fulfil his duties and play his part aright in all these. "Be not slothful in business." "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord." "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever." St. Paul does not tell us to withdraw from common relationships or from business. He does not blot out the words "home," "politics," "business." The Christian life always means for him a life of more varied and nobler interests.

What, then, does he mean by saying that they who have wives should be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not? What St. Paul is enjoining here is the relative value of the present order of things. Home, joy, sorrow, business—these are the most real things of the present; but he says even these, which are the most real, are not ends in themselves. They have uses to serve beyond the present. Do not take them as if they were final; learn to look through them and beyond them.

Let us consider them one by one.

1. *Marriage*.—"Those that have wives as though they had none." St. Paul means by this expression domestic life generally. He does not mean that marriage is not a good thing. He is not doing what some Christian people have done—speaking slightly of marriage, in the interests of godliness. Nor does he mean that marriage is to be looked upon lightly, that men and women should enter into that relationship and then take it as a little thing. That on the face of it would be contrary to the whole strain of the Scriptures. It would be contrary to the Apostle's own teaching, "Husbands, *love* your wives." St. Paul means by marriage domestic life, and his meaning is that a true family life looks on to something beyond itself, and is meant to prepare for something beyond itself. A good husband, a good

wife, children growing up in the home united in family affection, a happy home life, are among the best things we can have here. They are present blessings, but they are prophetic of something beyond the present, and they are meant to train the affections for another home than the present. Home, and home relationships are not simply for our ease and comfort and happiness. They contribute much, where they are what they should be, to these. But they have a purpose beyond them. And we find most in them, and they do most for us, when we use them with a recognition of this greater purpose. To let home become everything to us is to make it less than if it were only a part of our life.

¶ Rachel, the daughter of Lord Southampton, married in 1670 William Russell, the younger son of the Earl of Bedford. It was a very happy marriage. In one of her letters to him she writes, "My best life, make my felicity entire by believing my heart possessed with all the gratitude, honour, and passionate affection to your person any creature is capable of; and this granted, what have I to ask but a continuance (if God see fit) of these present enjoyments? if not, a submission without murmur to His most wise dispensations and unerring providence. He knows best when we have had enough here; what I most earnestly beg from His mercy is, that we both live so that, whichever goes first, the other may not sorrow as for one of whom they have no hope. Then let us cheerfully expect to be together to a good old age; if not, let us not doubt but He will support us under what trial He will inflict upon us. . . . Excuse me, if I dwell too long upon this; it is from my opinion that if we can be prepared for all conditions, we can with the greater tranquillity enjoy the present, which I hope will be long; though when we change, it will be for the better, I trust, through the merits of Christ."<sup>1</sup>

¶ You cannot love a man, a woman, a child, without entering that centre of things where love alone reaches its true meaning. It is only when we have touched the timeless in those we love that we enter on the true glory of loving. It is only then that love becomes the ingredient and furtherer of the highest in us. It is this that gives love its permanency, when all else has fallen away; when youth has passed, when beauty has faded, when trials and difficulties come. When love inhabits this sphere it takes on a Divine patience, a forgiveness to the uttermost, a hopefulness that no disappointments can quench

<sup>1</sup> *The Morning Watch*, September, 1906, p. 100.

Here the eternity in us touches the eternity in our friend, and makes our love immortal.<sup>1</sup>

2. *Sorrow and Joy*.—"Those that weep, as though they wept not; and those that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not." Again we must bear in mind that St. Paul is speaking in a terse, epigrammatic way. There is nothing more real to us than our joys and sorrows, and we cannot make believe about them. And there are sorrows that come, that possess us wholly for the time; we can do nothing with them, we cannot moderate them or put them aside. But we are not to let ourselves be carried off our feet by either the troubles of life or its joys. It is the part of those who believe in another life to have balance and moderation and self-control in these things. St. Paul would say, "Joy is joy and sorrow is sorrow; you will weep and you will laugh. Sorrow will be bitter and joy sweet. But do not make too much of either. Both will pass, and they will be only memories to you some day, but they ought to leave you different yourself. Let both have a place in a larger conception of life. Look beyond them to some purpose which God means them to serve."

Fair vessel hast thou seen with honey filled,  
Which is no sooner opened, than descend  
Upon the clammy sweets by bees distilled  
A troop of flies, quick swarming without end?

Yet these when one doth fan away and beat,  
Such as had lighted with a fearful care  
On the jar's edge, nor cumbered wings and feet,  
Lightly they mount into the upper air.

But all that headlong plunged those sweets among,  
They cannot fly, in cloying sweetness bound;  
The heavy toils have all around them clung,  
In woful surfeiting their lives are drowned.

Such vessel is this world—fanned evermore  
By death's dark Angel with his mighty wing;  
Then all that had in pleasure's honied store  
Their spirits sunk, they upward cannot spring.

<sup>1</sup> J. Brierley, *The Secret of Living*, 35.

Only they mount, who on this vessel's side  
 With heed alighting, had with extreme lip  
 Just ventured, there while suffered to abide,  
 Its sweets in measure and with fear to sip.<sup>1</sup>

¶ In a palace, at Florence, there are two pictures which hang side by side. One represents a stormy sea with its wild waves, and black clouds and fierce lightnings flashing across the sky. In the waters a human face is seen, wearing an expression of the utmost agony and despair. The other picture also represents the sea tossed by as fierce a storm, with as dark clouds; but out of the midst of the waves a rock rises, against which the waters dash in vain. In a cleft of the rock are some tufts of grass and green herbage, with sweet flowers, and amid these a dove is seen sitting on her nest quiet and undisturbed by the wild fury of the storm. The first picture represents the sorrow of the world helpless and despairing; the second the sorrow of the Christian nestling in the bosom of God's unchanging love. When striving to bear on and bear up we may remember a fine passage of Jeremy Taylor's: "Well, let the world have its course, I am content to bear it; God's will be done; let the sea be troubled; let the waves thereof roar; let the winds of affliction blow; let the waves of sorrow rush upon me; let the darkness of grief and heaviness compass me about; yet will I not be afraid. These storms will blow over; these winds will be laid; these waves will fall; this tempest cannot last long; and these clouds shall be dispelled; whatsoever I suffer here shall shortly have an end. I shall not suffer eternally; come the worst that can come death will put an end to all my sorrow and miseries. Lord grant me patience here and ease hereafter! I will suffer patiently whatever can happen, and shall endeavour to do nothing against my conscience and displeasing unto Thee; for all is safe and sure with him who is certain and sure of a blessed Eternity."<sup>2</sup>

3. *Business*.—"Those that buy, as though they possessed not." St. Paul recognizes, as every man must, the important place which business holds in life. Business or trade belongs just as much to life as the home and family do, or as the State does. It is part of the order of things, and may have just as great a religious value as the home has. Do not think of St. Paul as speaking slightly of business, or as having any such idea in his mind. He has not. Nor does he mean that men are to be half in earnest in their work. "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily."

<sup>1</sup> Trench, *Poems*, 323.

<sup>2</sup> J. H. Goodman, *The Lordship of Christ*, 6.

What he means is that business is not an end in itself. It is ordained in the providence of God to serve for things greater than itself. Buy, but do not let business be your life. As we are not to lose ourselves in joy or sorrow, so we are not to lose ourselves in business.

¶ When outward business diverted him a little from the thought of God, a fresh remembrance coming from God invested his soul, and so inflamed and transported him, that it was difficult for him to restrain himself.

That he was more united to God in his ordinary occupations than when he left them for devotion in retirement, from which he knew himself to issue with much dryness of spirit.

That the most excellent method which he had found of going to God, was that of *doing our common business*, without any view of pleasing men, and (as far as we are capable) purely *for the love of God*.

That it was a great delusion to think that the times of prayer ought to differ from other times; that we were as strictly obliged to adhere to God by action in the time of action as by prayer in its season.<sup>1</sup>

### III.

#### A GENERAL DIRECTION.

“Use the world, as not abusing it.”

1. These English words—“use” and “abuse”—stand to each other in much the same relation as the corresponding words of the Apostle. To “use” anything is to turn it to account in the direction of those ends for which it is really needed. To “abuse” is simply to turn a thing *away from* its true and proper use. Often, in doing this, you spoil the thing itself; so that the idea of injury comes to be generally involved in that of abuse. But, originally and literally, to “abuse” is just to employ anything in a manner that is *aside from* those purposes for which it is needed and designed.

2. The word “world” is an expression which is used in the New Testament Scriptures with several meanings, and therefore needs to be interpreted with the utmost care and discrimination. Sometimes it denotes the whole material universe as created by

<sup>1</sup> Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, 18, 21.



God, "the maker of heaven and earth." Sometimes it is this world in which God has placed man for a time, the temporary scene of human existence, man's abode, in which he sojourns for a limited period. Sometimes it conveys the idea, not of a material creation of God's fashioning, but of a spirit of worldliness in God's reasoning creatures which is antagonistic to the will of God. Sometimes it is the aggregate of those possessed by this spirit who, having been made by God, rebel against His authority and refuse to heed His commands. Sometimes it is the equivalent of what is known to us by the name of Society, *i.e.* the environment of persons and things, in the midst of which each one lives his life here, and which, while not evil in itself, must be used, as St. Paul writes in his letter to the Christians at Corinth, with caution, "not overusing it," or "using it to the full," as his words really mean.

3. The text implies that this world has its uses. It stands in direct relation to human needs. According to the original purpose of God, it is our friend and not our enemy—a servant to minister to our wants, not a tyrant to oppress or degrade us. Why has God placed us here at all, if our surroundings have not their divinely appointed uses? It is true that the world may become a dangerous foe to our spiritual welfare; but this is only when we stand in false relations to it. Even God Himself cannot be to the wicked all that He can be to the "pure in heart." And the world, which is God's minister to us, cannot subserve the purposes which it is meant to fulfil, unless we use it aright. "Worldliness" is simply living as if the visible were all, as if we were merely visible creatures amongst visible things, forgetful that we are spiritual beings, whose abiding home is the eternal. "To use as not abusing": this is the grand principle of the unworldly life. And if we would see how we may and do *abuse* the world, we have only to consider what are those *uses* which it is intended to subserve.

(1) *This world is designed to aid in revealing God to us.*—God is the Eternal Spirit; we are finite spirits. How is the Infinite to manifest Himself to the finite? Each human spirit is mysteriously associated with a material frame; and by this frame it is connected with that great world of matter and of circumstance on which God stamps the tokens of His presence, power, and



character. Whatever other or more direct methods God may have of speaking to our souls, this is at least one medium of communication. The material world and the human body, linked together by affinity, form a bridge over which the thoughts of God pass into the mind of man. And we may be sure that our relations to the world outside of us have their own distinctive part to play in the revelation of God within us. Humanity is doubtless a better interpreter of God than nature; but then nature may help to interpret humanity. The highest manifestation which has been given us of God is in Jesus Christ, His incarnate Son: but this Jesus becomes intelligible to us in virtue of His relations to the world outside of Himself. Christ is "the image of the invisible God"; when we see Christ, we "see the Father." But how do we see Christ, except through the medium of His surroundings? The character of Jesus becomes visible to us as we behold His attitude and conduct in circumstances which are more or less familiar to ourselves, and the significance of which we can therefore in some measure appreciate. It is because He lived and moved in our "world" that what He did and suffered becomes, through the interpreting power of our own human experience, a revelation of the heart of God.

¶ What an "abuse" of the world it is when men employ it to conceal God! The attributes of the Most High are mirrored in the world; but men look at the mirror from such an angle of vision as to see only its glittering surface, and not the reflection of the Divine glory. You have heard of the astronomer who said that what *he* found in the study of the starry sky was the glory of Newton and his fellow-thinkers, and not the "glory of God."<sup>1</sup>

¶ That was a fine reply of the astronomer, who, when interrogated about the science he had been idolizing, said, "I am now bound for the kingdom of Heaven, and I take the stars on my way."<sup>2</sup>

(2) *This world is designed to aid in the formation and development of spiritual character.*—The material exists for the sake of the spiritual. This earth has been furnished as a school for the education and discipline of man. Labour is the counteractive of lust; affliction, of pride. Our relationships tend to destroy selfishness; our temptations reveal to us our own weakness. The

<sup>1</sup> T. C. Finlayson.

<sup>2</sup> S. L. Wilson, *Helpful Words for Daily Life*, 240.

whole world is an arena of education by probation,—at once a weigh-house in which character is tested, and a gymnasium in which character is trained. It furnishes us with a plastic material, the moulding and shaping of which reveals the native royalty and develops the native capacity of our spiritual being.

¶ Man learns to swim by being tossed into life's maelstrom and left to make his way ashore. No youth can learn to sail his life-craft in a lake sequestered and sheltered from all storms, where other vessels never come. Skill comes through sailing one's craft amidst rocks and bars and opposing fleets, amidst storms and whirls and counter currents.<sup>1</sup>

Life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,  
And heated hot with burning fears,  
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,  
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use.<sup>2</sup>

(3) *This world is designed to be a sphere for the service of God.*—God is a Spirit; and we are spirits; hence all true service of God is, in its root and essence, spiritual. Yet possibly it may be a necessity for the finite spirit that it shall be able to embody its devotion towards God in forms external to itself. At any rate, in giving to the human spirit a tabernacle of flesh, and thus connecting it with the material world, God has made that world an instrument for the expression of our spiritual obedience. If one human soul loves another, it longs for some opportunity of embodying its affection. If a servant is really devoted to his master, he rejoices when his master so takes him into confidence as to enable him to give some practical manifestation of his loyalty. And so, God has placed us in a world which may become a sphere of manifest service. He brings us into relations which are constantly trying our obedience, and therefore furnishing us with the means of expressing it.

Methought that in a solemn church I stood.  
Its marble acres, worn with knees and feet,  
Lay spread from door to door, from street to street.  
Midway the form hung high upon the rood

<sup>1</sup> N. D. Hillis, *A Man's Value to Society*, 46.

<sup>2</sup> Tennyson, *In Memoriam*.

Of Him who gave His life to be our good;  
 Beyond, priests flitted, bowed, and murmured meet,  
 Among the candles shining still and sweet.  
 Men came and went, and worshipped as they could—  
 And still their dust a woman with her broom,  
 Bowed to her work, kept sweeping to the door.  
 Then saw I, slow through all the pillared gloom,  
 Across the church a silent figure come:  
 "Daughter," it said, "thou sweetest well my floor!"  
 It is the Lord! I cried, and saw no more.<sup>1</sup>

## IV.

## A GOOD REASON.

"For the fashion of this world passeth away."

1. The word "fashion" here is a translation of the Greek word *schema*, from which we get our English word "scheme." The text means that the present order of things, the earthly plan or scheme in which we live, must come to an end. It is true, indeed, of the earth itself. "This goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours." The fashion of this world passeth away; even the solid earth is moving on to sure destruction.

¶ Above the valley of the Neckar rises the magnificent ruin of Heidelberg. To the world without it still presents a front of majesty and beauty. The mountain crags seem not more massive and enduring than its battlements of stone, its towers and walls of solid masonry. But within, what a picture of desolation meets the eye! Broken columns and shattered carvings are scattered in confusion about the deserted court. Fragments of costly monuments are mingled with the *débris* of crumbling walls, and trees are growing upon ramparts where once the cannon thundered to the echoes of the surrounding hills. The rent tower discloses the ingenuity of man to build, and his yet greater power to destroy.

¶ The word translated "fashion" literally means "stage scenery." St. Paul does not mean that everything on earth

<sup>1</sup> George MacDonald.

is perishable, but that every *unreal* thing is perishable. Stage scenery is unreal scenery. It does not represent the actual facts of the greenroom. Many an actor is bringing down the house with laughter when his own heart is breaking. St. Paul saw that a great deal of life is simply stage acting—concealment of the greenroom. How many kind things are spoken, not in order to reveal, but in order to cover! How many gifts are sent, not for *your* sake, but for the sake of the donor! How many blandishments are lavished for a vote! How many visits are paid for a subscription! St. Paul says all this unreality will pass away. When will it pass away? At death, you say. No; death does not reveal the reality of life. Death does not tear away the mask from the face of my brother. Death is itself a mask, itself an unreality. So far from causing the stage scenery to vanish, it is itself the climax of illusion. It is not to death I look; it is to love. Love is the great dispeller of unreality. Love is the great emancipator from stage scenery. Love is the true rending of the veil between this world and the world to come.<sup>1</sup>

2. No doubt the world itself will pass away. For that we have the warrant of Scripture, and Science has countersigned the warrant. But this warrant is not to be found here. St. Paul is not predicting a future catastrophe; he is announcing a present fact. He does not affirm that "the cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples" of this familiar world, yea, the solid globe itself, with all who inherit it, shall dissolve, and like the baseless fabric of a vision, like an insubstantial pageant faded, "leave not a rack behind." He affirms a fact with which we are more immediately concerned, namely, that *the fashion*, the form, the whole outward aspect, of the world in which we live fades, changes, passes, while we look upon it; that it is now, and always, passing away: and from this fact he infers the immense importance of fixing our affections and placing our aims, not on the outward show, the frail and shifting forms of things, but on the sacred and enduring realities which lie beneath and behind them. There are two ways in which it is true that the fashion of this world is passing away.

(1) First it is true *with respect to all the things by which we are surrounded*.—It is only in poetry—the poetry of the Psalms for example—that the hills are called "everlasting." Go to the

<sup>1</sup> G. Matheson.

side of the ocean which bounds our country, and watch the tide going out, bearing with it the sand which it has worn from the cliffs; the very boundaries of our land are changing; they are not the same as they were when these words were written. Every day new relationships are forming around us; new circumstances are calling upon us to act, to act manfully, firmly, decisively, and up to the occasion, remembering that an opportunity once gone is gone for ever. Indulge not in vain regrets for the past, in vainer resolves for the future; act, act in the present.

¶ The difference between the ancient and the modern world is this: in the one the great reality of being was *now*; in the other it is *yet to come*. If you would witness a scene characteristic of the popular life of old, you must go to the amphitheatre of Rome, mingle with its 80,000 spectators, and watch the eager faces of Senators and people; observe how the masters of the world spend the wealth of conquest, and indulge the pride of power; see every wild creature that God has made, from the jungles of India to the mountains of Wales, from the forests of Germany to the deserts of Nubia, brought hither to be hunted down in artificial groves by thousands in an hour; behold the captives of war, noble perhaps and wise in their own land, turned loose, amid yells of insult more terrible for their foreign tongue, to contend with brutal gladiators trained to make death the favourite amusement, and present the most solemn of individual realities as a wholesale public sport; mark the light look with which the multitude, by uplifted finger, demands that the wounded combatant be slain before their eyes; notice the troop of Christian martyrs awaiting hand in hand the leap from the tiger's den; and, when the day's spectacle is over and the blood of two thousand victims stains the ring, follow the giddy crowd as it streams from the vomitories into the street, trace its lazy course into the forum, and hear it there scrambling for the bread of private indolence doled out by the purse of public corruption; and see how it suns itself to sleep in the open ways, or crawls into foul dens till morning brings the hope of games and merry blood again;—then you have an idea of that Imperial people, with their passionate living for the moment, which the Gospel found in occupation of the world.

And if, on the other hand, you would fix in your thought an image of the popular mind of Christendom, I know not that you could do better than go at sunrise with the throng of toiling men to the hillside where Whitefield or Wesley is



about to preach. Hear what a great heart of reality is in that hymn which swells upon the morning air—a prophet's strain upon a people's lips! See the rugged hands of labour, clasped and trembling, wrestling with the Unseen in prayer! Observe the uplifted faces, deep-lined with hardship and with guilt, streaming now with honest tears, and flushed with earnest shame, as the man of God awakes the life within, and tells of Him that bare for us the stripes and cross, and offers the holiest spirit to the humblest lot, and tears away the veil of sense from the glad and awful gates of heaven and hell. Go to these people's homes, and observe the decent tastes, the sense of domestic obligations, the care for childhood, the desire for instruction, the neighbourly kindness, the conscientious self-respect, and say whether the sacred image of duty does not live within those minds; whether holiness has not taken the place of pleasure in their idea of life: whether for them too the toils of nature are not lightened by some external hope, and their burden carried by some angel of love, and the strife of necessity turned into the service of God. The present tyrannizes over their character no more, subdued by a future infinitely great; and hardly though they lie upon the rock of this world, they can live the life of faith; and while the hand plies the tools of earth, keep a spirit open to the skies.<sup>1</sup>

(2) Again, this is true *with respect to ourselves*.—"The fashion of this world passeth away" in us. The feelings we have now are not those which we had in childhood. There has passed away a glory from the earth—the stars, the sun, the moon, the green fields have lost their beauty and significance—nothing remains as it was, except their repeated impressions on the mind, the impressions of time, space, eternity, colour, form; these cannot alter, but all besides has changed. Our very minds alter. There is no bereavement so painful, no shock so terrible, but time will remove or alleviate it. The keenest feeling in this world time wears out at last, and our minds become like old monumental tablets which have lost the inscription once graven deeply upon them.

¶ Jesus (on whom be peace!) said, "The world is a bridge; pass over it, but do not build upon it."—Inscription on a bridge at Fatehpur Sikri.<sup>2</sup>

¶ Perhaps no one has pictured with truer hand the changing fashion of the world in the passing of human life than Long-

<sup>1</sup> James Martineau.

<sup>2</sup> Field, *A Little Book of Eastern Wisdom*, 97.



fellow in his poem, "The Old Clock on the Stairs," in which he tells us that

Through days of sorrow and of mirth,  
Through days of death and days of birth,  
Through every swift vicissitude  
Of changeful time, unchanged it has stood,  
And as if, like God, it all things saw,  
It calmly repeats those words of awe,—  
    "For ever—never!  
    Never—for ever!"

In that mansion used to be  
Free-hearted Hospitality;  
His great fires up the chimney roared;  
The stranger feasted at his board;  
But, like the skeleton at the feast,  
That warning timepiece never ceased,—  
    "For ever—never!  
    Never—for ever!"

There groups of merry children played,  
There youths and maidens dreaming strayed;  
O precious hours! O golden prime,  
And affluence of love and time!  
Even as a miser counts his gold,  
Those hours the ancient timepiece told,—  
    "For ever—never!  
    Never—for ever!"

From that chamber, clothed in white,  
The bride came forth on her wedding night;  
There, in that silent room below,  
The dead lay in his shroud of snow;  
And in the hush that followed the prayer,  
Was heard the old clock on the stair,—  
    "For ever—never!  
    Never—for ever!"

All are scattered now and fled,  
Some are married, some are dead;  
And when I ask, with throbs of pain,  
"Ah! when shall they all meet again?"  
As in the days long since gone by,  
The ancient timepiece makes reply,—  
    "For ever—never!  
    Never—for ever!"

## SPIRITUAL DETACHMENT

Never here, for ever there,  
Where all parting, pain, and care,  
And death, and time shall disappear,—  
For ever there, but never here!  
The horologe of Eternity  
Sayeth this incessantly,—  
    “ For ever—never!  
    Never—for ever!”

## ADAPTABILITY.

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## ADAPTABILITY.

I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some.  
1 Cor. ix. 22.

No one, perhaps, of St. Paul's sayings describes the general effect of his life and character with such terseness, or so vividly, as this. Not that the Apostle can be thought of as deliberately framing an epigram which might afterwards do duty in a biography. He is on his defence, as against the charge, widely circulated by his Corinthian opponents, that he was really a selfish person who was making a good thing out of the Gospel; he is showing that, if he chose to stand upon the letter of his rights, he might have claimed more, and done less, than he did. Had silence been possible, we may be sure that he would gladly have said nothing about himself; but since there is this hostile criticism in the way of his usefulness, and he is forced to speak, he boldly asserts the rights which he had waived, and the loftiness of the motives which governed him. In so varied and complex a life as his, there was of course much that could not be compressed into any single saying; but nowhere else does he so nearly bring himself before us as a whole, or trace with so delicate yet powerful a hand the leading feature of his great career, as in the words, "I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some."

¶ "All things to all men." St. Paul is always in the face of a listening crowd. Every word, therefore, hits! He uses speech like a rapier, ready and rapid, which is quivering with personal characterization and the heat of the moment. He is aware of every objection that friend or foe can be framing, and he forestalls them, and he retorts. It turns this way and that. It has sharp recoils, and rushes to seize an advantage, and hastens to press a point that tells, and daring, venturous strokes that beat

back a possible counter-stroke, and then brimming bursts of sympathy that overmaster by their very suddenness. And then, again, not only debate is in his power, but also the townsman's delicate skill, what is called by the townsman's own name—his urbanity. We have only to recall the exquisite letter to Philemon on his runaway slave. Here is the gentleman, in the finest sense of the word, felt speaking; here are the polished tone, the veiled irony, the irresistible reserve, the quiet humour, the social grace, that all tell of one who, without risking his self-respect or his sincerity, yet by sheer force of trained social sympathy can throw himself into another's mind, can understand and allow for his prejudices, and see with his eyes, and so win him to do what he desires.<sup>1</sup>

## I.

## THE ADAPTABILITY OF ST. PAUL

"I am become all things to all men."

1. The great gift which St. Paul had received of God—next in order of importance after that of God's grace and truth—was the power of making himself at home with all classes, races, and degrees of men. A practical capacity like this cannot be learned like an art or a trick; it must be rooted in and spring from those affections and sympathies which are at the base of human character. Nor, although this gift was undoubtedly developed and shaped by grace, can we suppose it to have had no place in the character of St. Paul until he became a servant of Christ. Nature must have contributed to it at least somewhat of the raw material. As a Jew, we may be sure, Saul of Tarsus—apart from the limits which Rabbinical narrowness would have assigned to his sympathies—could already have said, with the heathen poet, that, being a man, he deemed nothing human strange. His broad and genial humanity must have belonged to the original outfit of his nature: for in him, the sympathies of our race lived with extraordinary freshness and power.

2. The Apostle himself has traced this versatile sympathy in three of its fields of operation.

(1) "To the Jews I became as a Jew."—In the Apostle's eyes the Jews were the race which had come nearest to God, and

<sup>1</sup> H. Scott Holland.



had most decisively rejected Him. And yet how tender and affectionate he is in his dealings with his poor countrymen, or with Christians who shared, less excusably, their hereditary prejudices! It might almost seem at times as if he had turned his back upon the Cross, so careful is he not to wound the sensitiveness of the adherents of the old religion. Recognizing circumcision as a national mark of distinction, while utterly denying its necessity to salvation, he circumcised Timothy, who had a right to it by his mother's side. Owing allegiance as a Jew to the Mosaic Ritual, so long as God suffered it to exist, he took legal vows, and was scrupulous in paying them. In arguing against Judaizers he allegorized the story of Hagar and Sarai, dealing with the Old Testament precisely after the manner of the Jewish Rabbis. And even when he is compelled, by virtue of his Apostolic commission, and by the imperious truth which fills and rules him, to utter the stern and awful sentence, that by their infatuated rejection of the true Messiah, who was the crown and promise of their history, they had rejected their God, how does he soften his message by all the resources of sympathy and affection!

(2) "To them that are without law, as without law."—St. Paul, the Apostle of revealed truth, the preacher of that One God who is known to and approached by man only through our Lord Jesus Christ, how does he make himself at home with the men and thoughts of the heathen world! Read his Epistles, and see how he can sympathize with the happy conqueror in the Greek games "who receiveth the prize," or with the old Latin idea of the city or state, imagined as a political transcript of the human body. How does he study each detail of the dress and accoutrements of the soldier who watches him as he writes to the Ephesians! How interested he is in the details of the administration of the empire when addressing the Romans! How tenderly does he survey the heathen world at Athens, as "feeling after God" as though on its way to "find him"!

(3) "To the weak I became weak."—There were "weak" Christians, as the Apostle gently calls them, who clung to observances, or who entertained scruples which were at variance with the import, freedom, generosity of the Gospel. And of that Gospel, in its unstinted liberty and grace, St. Paul was the

jealous and passionate champion. He, if any man, might have been expected to pour contempt upon a worthless scruple—to brand, with the sternest note of disapprobation, the forms, whether of life or of thought, which, however unintentionally, did dishonour to the work of the Redeemer. We know how he could express himself upon occasions when great principles were at stake, as when he told the Galatians sharply that if they were circumcised Christ would profit them nothing. But, as a rule, how tender he is, how full of consideration and charity, how tolerant, how hopeful! The prejudice against the meat exposed for sale in the Corinthian market was a weakly superstition; but for himself he would rather eat no flesh whatever while the world lasted than offend the conscience of a weak brother. The private observance of days, Jewish or other, at Rome, was no part of the Church's rule, and might easily engender Jewish errors; but the Apostle insists that those who kept these days did so to the Lord, and should be respected in the observance. The strong, he says, with a touch of quiet irony, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves. And—to the scandal of some, no doubt, at the time, but for the instruction of the Church of all ages—what he preached he practised.

¶ There was another aspect of the anxiety of this matter regarding the Bible to which Dr. Rainy was peculiarly sensitive. He had the keenest sense of the shock which the new view occasioned in many simple believing minds to whom the plenary inspiration of every word of Scripture had been an unquestioned assumption. And he had further an even stern feeling that those were blameworthy who by any regardlessness of utterance unnecessarily wounded the faith of such. It may be admitted that both Professor Dods and Professor Bruce were men who made what the ecclesiastical mind calls “unguarded statements.” Dr. Dods—one of the most absolutely truthful men who ever breathed, and a man incapable of choosing a word for any other reason than that it seemed the true one—spoke about the “errors” and “immoralities” in the Scripture narrative. Dr. Bruce, who had a Carlylean strain in his rugged nature, showed at times a *brusquerie* in dealing even with the most sacred themes which was not, but which was easily taken to be, irreverence and which jarred even on those who did not misunderstand it. Principal Rainy, along with all his tolerance on the general question, was extraordinarily sensitive to the hurting of tender

consciences. I remember his once saying to me of some utterances of one of the professors just named. "He does not realize the *sheer pain* words like these cause to many of our most believing people"; and, as he said it, there crossed his own face a look of "sheer pain" such as assuredly he would never have shown for any suffering inflicted on himself. Here surely is real breadth. So many men who pride themselves on their theological liberality are but one-sided in their sympathy. Here was a man who, on the one hand, resolutely supported the scholar's liberty to criticize with the frankest freedom the structure of the sacred narrative, but who, on the other, really saw and shared the pain such criticism caused in the mind of some simple and perhaps ignorant pious woman who, like Cowper's lace-worker, "just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true."<sup>1</sup>

3. St. Paul's life has ever been an enigma to those who have failed to appreciate this ruling principle of his conduct. To his contemporaries he seemed altogether inconsistent and unintelligible. The Jewish converts were at a loss to understand how one who had conceded so much to Judaism in the case of Timothy should refuse everything to Judaism in the case of the Galatians. The Gentile converts could not reconcile the utterances of a teacher who in the same breath declared that an idol was nothing in the world, and denounced the feasters in an idol's temple as having fellowship with devils. The party of tradition reviled him, because he broke loose from the time-honoured usages of his race and country. The friends of liberty suspected him, because he denounced in no sparing terms the practical licence which they grafted on his doctrine. And to modern critics also his conduct has appeared not less perplexing. The Paul of the Acts, they say, is a different person from the Paul of St. Paul's Epistles. They cannot identify the facile pupil of James, who to win over those many thousands of his fellow-countrymen lent himself to a complicity in Nazirite vows, with the stern master of Peter, who declared that those seeking justification through the Law had fallen from grace. The one character is to them irreconcilable with the other. Irreconcilable, yes, to those who do not appreciate the infinite power of love in concession, in adaptation, in expedient, in varying sympathy with the wants and the weaknesses and the prejudices and the ignorances of men, while

<sup>1</sup> P. C. Simpson, *The Life of Principal Rainy*, ii. 117.

holding firmly and maintaining boldly the great central truths of God. There is a concession which springs from cowardice, and there is a facility which is born of indifference. There is an adaptation which is the slave of self-interest, and there is a versatility which is leagued with fraud. Not such was the Apostle's principle of action. His was the elasticity of a keen, absorbing, dominating love, which concentrates its entire energies for the time on the one object before it, which watches every moment, seizes every opportunity, fastens on every rising emotion, and ingratiates itself with every transient thought, that it may force an entrance for the truth which shall save a soul from self and sin, and gain it for God.

¶ The root of all that was peculiar in Mr. Robertson's character and correspondence lay in the intense sensitiveness which pervaded his whole nature. His senses, his passions, his imagination, his conscience, his spirit, were so delicately wrought, that they thrilled and vibrated to the slightest touch. His great power of sympathy arose out of this sensitiveness. My misfortune or happiness (he says) is power of sympathy. I can feel with the Brahmin, the Pantheist, the Stoic, the Platonist, the Transcendentalist, perhaps the Epicurean. At least, I feel the side of Utilitarianism which seems like truth, though I have more antipathy to it than anything else. I can suffer with the Tractarian, tenderly shrinking from the gulf blackening before him, as a frightened child runs back to its mother from the dark, afraid to be alone in the fearful loneliness; and I can also agonize with the infidels, recoiling from the cowardice and false rest of superstition. Many men can feel each of these separately, and they are happy. They go on straight forward, like a one-eyed horse, seeing all clear on one side. But I feel them all at once, and so far I am *allseitig, ein ganzer Mann*. But I am not such in this sense, that I can harmonize them all; I can only feel them. For this greatness there must be an all-feeling heart, together with an all-seeing eye.<sup>1</sup>

## II.

### THE USES OF ADAPTABILITY.

The attitude of St. Paul in the first age is the precedent for Christian workers in all ages. We too, like the Apostle, must

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters of the Rev. F. W. Robertson*, 154.

in a certain sense strive to be all things to all men. Effectual Christian service is a difficult and delicate art. No amount of zeal will save us from blundering and failure, unless along with our zeal we possess some of the insight which comes from sympathy with the people we try to help. There are few gifts more necessary, and less common, among Christian workers than this gift of imaginative sympathy, which can enter by intuition into other men's feelings and appreciate their condition and understand instinctively how to deal with their case. Such a gift is too precious to be common. It depends partly on moral endowment and inheritance. But a sensitive nature may be coarsened and blunted by selfishness, as it may be cultivated by faithful obedience. Thoughtful love grows wise by constant watching, and strong by patient self-denial. Only the heart at leisure from itself has skill to sympathize. How few of us attain to the height of George Fox's wonderful petition: "I have prayed to be baptized into a sense of all conditions, that I might be able to know the needs and feel the sorrows of all."

¶ There are seven octaves on an ordinary piano. And most of us can hear every musical note which a piano sounds. But there are both higher and lower octaves which certain instruments reach, and which many human ears cannot take in. Some can hear the higher notes, but not the lower, and with others it is the reverse. We all differ in the same way with regard to the things which impress us, catch hold of our imagination, appeal to the best and worst in us, and bring out our evil and our good. There are sermons preached in every sanctuary which move some to tears, stir them to impassioned devotion, and lift them up to the very gates of heaven. Yet when those very sermons have been preached others will declare that the preacher has been quite out of form, and that his words were wearying and unprofitable. And it by no means follows that they are not good and earnest Christian men. It only means that the preacher has been touching chords which are not found in them.<sup>1</sup>

1. Behind all efficient *personal Christian service*, there must lie this principle of adaptation. St. Paul became Jew, Greek, Roman, and accursed in order to save men. He put himself into the place of the one he sought to help, and from that new stand-

<sup>1</sup> J. G. Greenhough, *The Mind of Christ in St. Paul*, 157.



point learned the secret path of access to his soul. No one can understand another who is unable to leave himself behind and look upon the world as the other person does; and this requires the sympathetic nature. It is the method of the loving heart. To him who really loves, the inner chambers of the other life are opened that he may dwell therein a welcome guest. The magic of a fellow-feeling has not been equalled as a means whereby the full life of a Christian is admitted to the starving life of him who knows only the flesh.

¶ Sanctified ingenuity is a gift to be prized highly, both for its value and for its rarity.<sup>1</sup>

¶ Mrs. Stelling was not a loving, tender-hearted woman: she was a woman whose skirt sat well, who adjusted her waist and patted her curls with a pre-occupied air when she inquired after your welfare. These things, doubtless, represent a great social power, but it is not the power of love.<sup>2</sup>

¶ You mistook me in thinking I did not sympathize. A few years ago, when I felt less, you would have been more satisfied, when the eyes showed moisture, the voice emotion, and when I had a gentler manner and a more ready show of responding to what was expected. Now, a certain amount of iron has gone into my blood; and a sardonic sentence often conceals the fact that I wince to the very quick from something that has gone home.

Oh, many a shaft at random sent  
Finds mark the archer little meant!

I no longer wear my heart upon my sleeve, "for daws to peck at." But there is not a conversation, there is not a book I read, there is not a visit I pay, that does not cut deep traces in the "Calais" of my heart.<sup>3</sup>

(1) At the very outset, it is essential that there should be respect for other people's views. Men do not think alike in this world. They cannot. Many may be inclined to regard the results which we have reached through patience and toil and tribulation, not only with opposition, but resentment; while we in turn may look upon them with contempt because they have not yet caught up with our vision. How poor and mean and petty must they be whose horizon is bounded and circumscribed!

<sup>1</sup> H. W. Horwill.

<sup>2</sup> George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*.

<sup>3</sup> *Life and Letters of the Rev. F. W. Robertson*, 455.



Of course the truth is one and clear,—easily discerned—and we have it. Nothing but stupidity or obstinacy could prevent anybody from beholding it as well as we. Thus does some heartless and incompetent teacher belabour a backward boy (whose backwardness is due perhaps to defective vision or imperfect hearing or defect in some of the other faculties of perception) because he cannot keep pace with those to whom God has given every needful endowment. When we give way to our natural impulses we are impatient and intolerant. It is this spirit that has poured the gall of bitterness without measure into social and domestic life, filled neighbourhoods with discord, sown the seeds of strife among the nations of mankind and not infrequently deluged the earth with blood.

¶ Without sympathy in the high sense of intellectual penetration, kindness may be only folly, and intended aid, oppression.<sup>1</sup>

(2) There must be respect for other men's convictions. These are things to which men come, often by painful effort, and always with solemnity. Few men are willing to abandon them without a struggle. They may be false, but they are precious. Not infrequently they are interwoven with the holiest traditions. For the sake of them, their holders are frequently willing and eager to wear the martyr's crown. The fact that we may know or think we know other men's convictions to be false, does not alter the obligation to treat them with respect. For when we reflect we must perceive that there is some real reason for every deep-seated conviction. And not until there is a mutual approach, not until there is a disposition manifest to acknowledge that there is some sanity in an opponent's view, do the conditions exist for a real advance. One lesson which the experience of human conflict has clearly taught is that before there can be liberty for new thought there must be deference and courtesy paid to the older belief.

¶ There is an incident in point in the life of the Rev. John Murker of Banff. A new church had been built, but not without strong opposition from some of the older members. Murker himself tells what occurred:—

At last the day arrived when we had to bid farewell to

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin, *A Knight's Faith* (*Works*, xxxi. 386).

the old time-honoured building. The services were of a character suitable to the occasion. In the morning my text was—"If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence"; in the evening—"Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward," trying to blend in my discourses tender reverence for the past with a consciousness of duty for the present. At the close of the evening service, I felt in no mood to stand in the vestry with the deacons, as was my custom, but hurried home seeking retirement and privacy for my thoughts. I had not been more than an hour seated in my study when an uncontrollable desire seized me to go back and look at the old place once more, before it was turned to secular use, as was to be the case on Monday morning. It was a clear, frosty night, and I slipped down to the chapel as quietly as possible, so as not to attract observation. My difficulty was how to get in. I did not like to go to the beadle for the key; but, to my astonishment, as I was passing, I found the key in the lock, and, without stopping to inquire how this was, or thinking any more about it, stepped in. I was soon disturbed in my musings by the suppressed sounds of a voice familiar to my ear; I listened attentively, and turning round to one of the square seats near the pulpit, I dimly saw the figure of one of my senior members whom I deeply respected, but who had grieved me somewhat by his lukewarmness with respect to the building of the new chapel. There he was kneeling beside the seat on which he had sat when a *laddie*, and he was so much absorbed in his prayer as not to hear my footsteps. Afraid to move lest I should disturb him, I stood still and could not but listen to the broken sentences that reached my ear as his voice rose above a whisper and swelled into audible tones. The following bits of his fervent supplication ejaculated forth as the tears came streaming down his cheeks. I distinctly heard:—"For forty years this place has been a Bethel to me; here I was born again. . . . But if we maun leave this house may Thy presence gang wi' us . . . forgive my obstinateness, mak' the cause even mair prosperous in the new chapel. . . . Come doon, O Lord, come doon in Thy power. . . . Bless oor young pastor. . . . Lift upon him and us a' the licht o' Thy coontenance, and mak' the little ane a thousand."

I could stand no longer the spectator of such a scene; my presence was, I felt, an almost sacrilegious intrusion; as quietly as possible I went away. But that prayer, or the fragments of it I got, had lifted a load from my mind. Next day I met the worthy old man and gave him a warmer shake of the hand than he had got from me for a long time, he not knowing the secret of it, nor

ever will in this world. All coldness and alienation of feeling had been melted in the fervour of that prayer which reached my ear and touched my heart. His position I now understood, and I did not think any the less of him for his lingering regard for the old, with which he had now to part.<sup>1</sup>

(3) Nor is this true only of beliefs. It applies in like manner to prejudice. Nothing in this world is quite so stubborn as prejudice. Nothing is so hard to overcome. Nothing so persists after every reason for its existence has passed away. Some prejudices are the peculiarities of the race, as if they were ingrained in the very nature of their possessors; some are characteristic of nations; some are local in their boundary, confined to community or time; and some are purely individual, growing out of environment, or tradition, or training. But however encountered they are relentless. Woe to the man who ruthlessly runs up against them. Prejudice is a universal trait of mankind, and it behoves us, when we encounter it in others, not to try to neutralize or overcome it by a counter prejudice, but rather to stand in awe before it and pay obeisance to one of the common weaknesses of our poor humanity. This is the one and only solvent. Pride of opinion, the force of individual will, the virulence of hatred are all alike powerless before it. When we come to recognize that prejudice has some ground for existence in the order of the world and in the nature of man we begin the process by which it is ultimately to be undermined and uprooted. Respect a prejudice and you destroy its power for harm. It is like extracting the fangs of a venomous serpent. No matter how vindictive his feeling or his actions, his power for evil is gone. So though the animosity which prejudice has aroused may long remain, its poison has vanished as soon as those who might otherwise be its victims meet it with serenity and patience.

¶ To minds strongly marked by the positive and negative qualities that create severity—strength of will, conscious rectitude of purpose, narrowness of imagination and intellect, great power of self-control, and a disposition to exert control over others—prejudices come as the natural food of tendencies which can get no sustenance out of that complex, fragmentary, doubt-provoking knowledge which we call truth. Let a prejudice be bequeathed, carried in the air, adopted by hearsay, caught in

<sup>1</sup> J. Stark, *John Murker*, 192.

through the eye—however it may come, these minds will give it a habitation: it is something to assert strongly and bravely, something to fill up the void of spontaneous ideas, something to impose on others with the authority of conscious right: it is at once a staff and a baton. Every prejudice that will answer these purposes is self-evident.<sup>1</sup>

(4) Even human conventions may be deferred to. These, to be sure, lie on the surface of human life and seem not to be related in any vital way either to the established social order or to the progressive movements of the world. Yet they do have great power. There are no inherent reasons why there should be such a marked difference in the styles of dress between men and women. Yet the most persistent efforts, covering years and even generations, by those who bring forth the powerful argument of convenience and health have made but slight difference in changing the time-honoured practice. So with many of our habits and customs; they are superficial but they are commanding. The custom of uncovering the head in a church or other place of public assembly, the habit of saying "good morning," or "good evening," of wishing good health and prosperity to even the most casual acquaintance, are the invariable marks of good breeding, and good breeding is a fundamental requisite of the gentleman or the gentlewoman. No one can make any headway in an influential career who neglects this quality. St. Paul was a gentleman when he said, "I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee," and that gentlemanliness secured for him a respectful hearing.

¶ Darwin's way of looking at himself as an ignoramus in matters of art, was strengthened by the absence of pretence, which was part of his character. With regard to questions of taste, as well as to more serious things, he always had the courage of his opinions. I remember, however, an instance that sounds like a contradiction to this: when he was looking at the Turners in Mr. Ruskin's bedroom, he did not confess, as he did afterwards, that he could make out absolutely nothing of what Mr. Ruskin saw in them. But this little pretence was not for his own sake, but for the sake of courtesy to his host. He was pleased and amused when subsequently Mr. Ruskin brought him some

<sup>1</sup> George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*.

photographs of pictures (I think Vandyke portraits), and courteously seemed to value my father's opinion about them.<sup>1</sup>

2. At the root of all efficient *evangelization* there must lie this same principle of adaptation. We are fishers of men, and the fisherman uses the bait that is most likely to catch the fish, not the bait that best suits his own palate.

¶ An illustration of this truth is afforded by the different characters of Gregory the Great and the missionary St. Augustine. Both were earnest, both enthusiastic, both ready to spend and to be spent, if only they might preach Christ crucified to the rude barbarians of Anglo-Saxon England. But St. Augustine from first to last was hampered by a want of elasticity, a narrowness, intellectual rather than moral, which led him to identify Christianity with that form of it with which, in his convent life at Rome, he had been familiar. St. Gregory, with that wisdom which a knowledge of many men and many minds had given, a delicate sense of the difference between essential and accidental, above all with a conviction of the necessity of "adaptation" in the preaching of Christianity, stands out as a model of wide and liberal-minded earnestness. When the collision with the old British Church came, St. Augustine with the same want of flexibility, not unmixed perhaps with a sense of his own importance as Metropolitan of England, was ready to contend to the last about the wording of a Liturgy, or the form of a tonsure, or the style of chronology. In vain St. Gregory's wise warning that he should adapt himself to national customs as far as possible, and "not value things because of places, but places for the good things they contained." With all his earnestness and missionary zeal, St. Augustine's want of versatility in the delivery of his message narrowed down his success to a small portion of the east of England, leaving the rest to be evangelized by the remnants of that very British Church with which he would not work.<sup>2</sup>

¶ Surely, surely the only true knowledge of our fellow-man is that which enables us to feel with him, which gives us a fine ear for the heart-pulses that are beating under the mere clothes of circumstance and opinion. Our subtlest analysis of schools and sects must miss the essential truth, unless it be lit up by the love that sees in all forms of human thought and work the life-and-death struggles of separate human beings.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, i. 125.

<sup>2</sup> A. L. Moore, *The Message of the Gospel*, 34.

<sup>3</sup> George Eliot, *Janet's Repentance*.



(1) We hear much of intellectual difficulties. How many of us attempt to qualify ourselves even to understand them far less to answer them? Again and again grievous harm is done to those for whom, as for us, Christ died, by the way in which those who have never themselves experienced difficulties of belief put such things aside as the work of the devil, or as wilful carping at revealed truth. To fail to throw ourselves into the different mental and moral states of our people will be to fail to deliver our message aright.

I, too, have passed through that self-same place  
Where you and the Dragon are face to face.

I neither vanquished nor slew him quite,  
But he fled away with the morning light.

Alas! so deadly the mortal fray,  
You cannot hearken the words I say.

And I, who remember the combat sore,  
Weep. I have passed that way before.<sup>1</sup>

(2) We hear much of scientific progress. The true Christian worker will meet the latest acquisitions of science, not with opposition, not with coldness, not with misgiving, but with a hearty welcome—the more hearty in proportion as his faith is the stronger—confident that in the end Divine truth can only gain by enlarging the bounds of human knowledge.

¶ Of all that elder race, he [Dean Church] was the one who most intimately followed on with the new movements and the fresh temper. He was absolutely in touch with the younger men. No brick walls blocked them out, or brought them into abrupt arrest. He did not encounter them with a challenge of suspicion, or hold them off at arm's length. He felt what was going forward; he believed in its worth; he took it seriously. Right to his very last years, he caught the spirit that was abroad, and was sensitive to its necessary differences from earlier types. Thus the younger men could come to him with their vague and crude aspirations, unafraid and unchilled. They were sure of sympathetic consideration—of a judgment that viewed their case from inside. They felt that he saw with their eyes; and, with that assurance, they

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Blaikie, *Songs by the Way*, 46.



could freely yield to his authority, which it was a delight to recognize.<sup>1</sup>

(3) Do we live at a time when æsthetic culture is making rapid strides? We will not let it drift into a position of antagonism to Christian worship, but will rather enlist it in the service of God, careful only not to make a mistress of a handmaid, and watchful always lest artistic feeling should step into the place of devotion, or music usurp the throne of prayer.

¶ If we are to become all things to all men that we may by all means save some, we are to become cultured to the cultured, refined to the refined. But we often work on a principle diametrically opposite to that of the Apostle. As a rule, much more pains is taken to adapt the Gospel to the uneducated than to the educated, and a severe unchristian shibboleth is set up as a test which serves only as a barrier. It is difficult to see why it should be right to respect the tastes of one class and wrong to respect the tastes of another.<sup>2</sup>

(4) There is urgent need for adaptation in the methods of our work among children. How many people who give Sunday-school addresses ever try to become children while they are speaking? How many make the least effort to drop all their philosophy and look at things with the simple directness of a child? How many remember that children become bored by a long and dull speech? How many think of saying a word about the peculiar difficulties of school life, the moral problems that arise even in the earliest years out of every day's work and play?

¶ The angel of the Lord—*i.e.* God in self-manifestation—said to Abraham, "*Now I know* that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me" (Gen. xxii. 12). This is one of the many instances in which God is represented as speaking in a human fashion, as if He were not omniscient. When the cry of Sodom came up to heaven, the Lord said, "I will go down and see . . . and *I will know.*" To Abraham He said, "*If I find* in Sodom fifty righteous men, I will spare it." The Infinite voluntarily approximates the ways and thoughts of finite beings. He is above all limitations, and to Him nothing is ever unknown. "I am God," He said, "and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning." But if He were to speak to men in terms of His foreknowledge absolute, they

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters of Dean Church*, 227.

<sup>2</sup> H. W. Horwill.

would "find no end, in wandering mazes lost." The All-wise in His intercourse with men is represented as like a human father conversing with his children. He speaks very simply, that He may be understood. Every teacher knows that he must sympathize with his pupils' ignorance, else they will never understand his knowledge. He must condescend to their condition, place himself alongside of them, study their limitations, take into account their inexperience. He has to bridge over the gulf that separates his mind from theirs. Unless he can express his ideas, not in his own language, but in theirs, their ears might as well be closed, and all his wisdom will be lost upon them. That is the principle on which the Divine Teacher of the human race acted in His revelation. He made His meaning intelligible by translating His great thoughts into simple forms of speech. He spake to men in the language of earth, that they might learn the laws of Heaven.<sup>1</sup>

(5) This principle must guide us in our attempts to reach those among the working classes who at present are never seen inside a place of worship. If elaborate sermons repel them, elaborate sermons must go. If pew-rents keep them away, pew-rents must go. We must learn their habits of thought, their opinions, even their prejudices, and use this knowledge for the extension of Christ's Kingdom.

¶ A certain shoemaker, radical and infidel, was among the number of those under Irving's special care; a home-workman of course, always present, silent, with his back turned upon the visitors, and refusing any communication except a sullen *humph* of implied criticism, while his trembling wife made her deprecating curtsy in the foreground. The way in which this intractable individual was finally won over is attributed by some tellers of the story to a sudden happy inspiration on Irving's part; but, by others, to plot and intention. Approaching the bench one day, the visitor took up a piece of patent leather, then a recent invention, and remarked upon it in somewhat skilled terms. The shoemaker went on with redoubled industry at his work; but at last, roused and exasperated by the speech and pretence of knowledge, demanded, in great contempt, but without raising his eyes, "What do *ye* ken about leather?" This was just the opportunity his assailant wanted; for Irving, though a minister and a scholar, was a tanner's son, and could discourse learnedly upon that material. Gradually interested and mollified, the cobbler

<sup>1</sup> J. Strachan, *Hebrew Ideals*, i. 171.

slackened work, and listened while his visitor described some process of making shoes by machinery, which he had carefully got up for the purpose. At last the shoemaker so far forgot his caution as to suspend his work altogether, and lift his eyes to the great figure stooping over his bench. The conversation went on with increased vigour after this, till finally the recusant threw down his arms:—"Od, you're a decent kind o' fellow!—do *you* preach?" said the vanquished, curious to know more of his victor. The advantage was discreetly, but not too hotly pursued; and on the following Sunday the rebel made a defiant, shy appearance at church. Next day Irving encountered him in the savoury Gallowgate, and hailed him as a friend. Walking beside him in natural talk, the tall probationer laid his hand upon the shirt-sleeve of the shrunken sedentary workman, and marched by his side along the well-frequented street. By the time they had reached the end of their mutual way not a spark of resistance was left in the shoemaker. His children henceforward went to school; his deprecating wife went to the kirk in peace. He himself acquired that suit of Sunday "blacks" so dear to the heart of the poor Scotchman, and became a churchgoer and respectable member of society; while his acknowledgment of his conqueror was conveyed with characteristic reticence, and concealment of all deeper feeling, in the self-excusing pretence—"He's a sensible man, *yon*; he kens about leather!"<sup>1</sup>

3. This principle of adaptation is the basis of all effective *missionary* work. It is not so long ago that the idea which people attached to missionary work was that Christian people went out to speak to heathen people; and they grouped under the phrase "heathen" all sorts of races, nationalities and religions. In point of fact we coloured the world, or the map of the world, in various colours, and the great bulk of it was coloured black. But the black covered various races, various nationalities, various creeds and differences, and it is one of the mistakes of those indefatigable and earnest men, that they did not learn to discriminate between the religious differences and the racial differences, between one nationality, race and creed, and another.

(1) It is at this point that we shall find the clue to the slow progress which the Christian religion has too often made among alien races in spite of the sturdiest missionary effort. The

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Oliphant, *The Life of Edward Irving*, i. 110.

advocates of Christianity have not always possessed the tolerance of their great Master. They have said, "This is the only way. Walk in this way or go to destruction." They have declared, "Here is the supreme and absolute truth. Believe it or perish in the darkness and misery of unbelief." The pagan peoples to whom they have gone with their patent panacea for the ills of life have made reply, "Our own sages have shown us another way, and we have found that a safer way to walk in. They have given us a different doctrine. They were good men and true, and we have not found their teachings repugnant to reason."

¶ Do not think you will ever get harm by striving to enter into the faith of others, and to sympathize, in imagination, with the guiding principles of their lives. So only can you justly love them, or pity them, or praise.<sup>1</sup>

¶ On the Day of Pentecost part of the charm was that every man heard the Gospel in his own language, and that is why our missionaries have to learn foreign languages, that they may preach the Gospel to men in the tongue to which they were born. But if they are to be of much use they must learn far more than the language of the people; they must learn their manners and customs, their history, their beliefs, their ideals, even their prejudices. Let no young missionary going forth doubt that there are elements of Divine truth in the faith and the practice of the heathen. And these are not to be despised or neglected, but are to be used as stepping-stones by which to lead them to something higher and better. I have always been profoundly moved by what an Indian woman said when she first heard the Gospel of Grace proclaimed—"That is what I have been expecting to hear all my life."<sup>2</sup>

¶ I once heard a distinguished missionary, who had spent his whole life among Indians upon the frontier, tell the story of a chieftain, who, just as he was about to go upon the war-path against the whites, lost a little child to whom he was devotedly attached. He sat down in his tepee a day and a night beside the body of the babe, gloomy and terrible. Then the white man came with a little coffin and placed it on the ground before him. The Indian sat an hour or more in silence. Then he rose and, after placing the babe in the coffin, washed away the paint and laid aside the feathers, which were the symbols of war, and dismissed his followers in peace.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin, *The Ethics of the Dust* (*Works*, xviii. 356).

<sup>2</sup> Professor J. Stalker.

<sup>3</sup> E. H. Capen.

¶ Those who heard Döllinger speak from the pulpit or in the lecture-room, from his seat in the chamber or in the Council, of course carried away with them the impression of a man of letters and distinction; but to see him out of doors, in the freedom of God's beautiful creations, was to learn his disposition and feel his geniality. There he was gladdened by tree and meadow, air and water, sunshine and the songs of birds. The air might be both raw and damp, but he always found something to praise in it, so that I was involuntarily reminded of a legend told me by Döllinger himself. "In one of the streets of Galilee there lay rotting the body of a dead dog. All who saw it exclaimed, 'How unsightly! How horrible! What a stench!' But Christ, who passed that way, said gently, 'Yet he has beautiful teeth.'" <sup>1</sup>

(2) It is said that those who try to plant Western corn in India have found that it was absolutely necessary before that Western corn could yield an adequate harvest that it should be naturalized by some years of sowing in Indian soil. Is not that a parable that the want of the East is the rising up of the Eastern to speak Christianity to the Eastern people, and that it is needful that our religious teaching should, as it were, be naturalized in the soil as it was naturalized in every soil in the history of the past, in order that it might gain power of full expression to the hearts of those who need it?

¶ Mozoomdar and his fellow-disciples of the Brahmo-Samaj claim that they can understand and interpret the teachings of Jesus far more accurately than is possible with the occidental mind. Jesus was an Oriental and they are Orientals. They, therefore, can see the truth which He taught as it stood in His own mind. They have comprehended as we do not the problems which confronted Him. To them the doctrines which He proclaimed in gorgeous imagery and poetic parables are not distorted by our western literalism. To them the work of our Lord and Master is revealed. Surely there is some force in this claim. But whether it is just or not, it must be clear that the point of view is of the utmost importance. If we are going to China, or Japan, or India, or the islands of the sea for the purpose of inducing them to take on our civilization and adopt our cult, we must first of all be able to see our own message as they see it, and we must moreover have a sympathetic knowledge of the doctrines and beliefs which we are seeking to overthrow and supplant.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> L. von Kobell, *Conversations of Dr. Döllinger*, 18.

<sup>2</sup> E. H. Capen, *The College and The Higher Life*, 206.



(3) Nor should we stop here. We should enter into the new life ourselves. If we are among Orientals, we must become Orientals. If we are with people who speak a different language, we must learn their language. If their dress is different from ours, we must conform to their style. This is the way to reach the heart of things.

¶ I know that some will condemn me as holding a doctrine of expediency; but I have no fear of condemnation from men of liberal minds and large hearts, whose condemnation I should be sorry to have, while the others would, more than likely, condemn me for any possible view that ventured to differ a hair's-breadth from their own. You know the old saw, "My doxy is orthodoxy, any other doxy is heterodoxy." Many a life has been lost in this country for learning no more than our alphabet: should more lives go merely for declining to learn the Arabic alphabet? Few, very few, will go further; few went further before, when it was strongly in vogue, and no Christianity to counteract it. Do we not ever see that, in the case of the real Mussulmans who come here, the most unpromising feature about them is their obstinacy and bigotry, which will not allow them even to look at our Gospel! I believe we shall gain a great point when Christianity ceases to be called the white man's religion. The foolish phrase, "Kusoma Kizungu," creates needless suspicion. I am ever battling with it among our own people, and trying to get them to use "Soma Luganda" instead. When will they learn that Christianity is cosmopolitan and not Anglican? But there is so much in our ways and methods that strengthens the idea of foreign rule—English *men*, English *church*, English *formularies*, English *Bishop*! Nor can the evil be readily rectified, until we are become more prepared to look on Africa as our *home*, or, if you like, till we become more truly identified with Africa than heretofore. Here, too, I fear, I shall be construed wrongly. But I allude only to mental affinity.<sup>1</sup>

### III.

#### THE LIMITS OF ADAPTABILITY.

In our times these words, "Becoming all things to all men," have acquired an unmusical sound. Those who have professedly acted on this principle have sometimes been viewed askance, partly with suspicion, and not always without reason. There

<sup>1</sup> *Mackay of Uganda*, 361.



has been the absence, apparently, of fixed principles; an indifference not only to dogmas, but also to truth; a liberality running to seed in mere licence; and a charity so broad as to border on defection and impurity. They have protested too much. Under the pretence of putting on the mantle of the Apostle, they have but used his robe as a convenient cloak to hide a self-seeking which he would have been the first in fiery words to condemn. For there is a cant of philosophy as well as of orthodoxy, and a kind of freedom which is spurious as well as one which is heaven-born and Divine.

1. Let us be sure that we have the right *aim*. St. Paul had only one aim—"that I may by all means save some." Some become all things to all men that they may by all means destroy some. Satan himself can become an angel of light if it suits his purpose. There are others who become all things to all men to avoid trouble and persecution. They can be very religious in a prayer-meeting where none but Christians are present, but when they get out into worldly society they so adapt themselves to the fancies of their associates that there is no mark by which they can be recognized as Christians. That is as far removed as possible from the spirit of St. Paul. Dare we, without hypocrisy, quote this declaration of his as the watchword of our own lives? Are we jealous about tradition and usage rather than about saving men? Are we tenacious of our comforts and luxuries when by sacrificing them we might rescue our brother for whom Christ died? Are we standing upon our dignity, unwilling to adopt some method that we think to be beneath us, while we are surrounded by multitudes who perish? Do we think indeed that it is possible for us to save our own souls while we are indifferent to the salvation of others?

¶ While St. Paul's heart is on fire his reason is cool; after all this expenditure of feeling and effort he looks for very partial results. "That I may save *some*." Not "all"—that were too much to hope. But whether in the Jewish synagogue or on Mars' Hill in Athens; whether among scholars or the unlettered; whether amidst friends or foes; whether he stands face to face with multitudes or is pleading with a single soul; he keeps one purpose steadily before him; he is what he is, he does what he does, that some at least may know the power of that faithful

saying which is ever worthy of all acceptance, that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."<sup>1</sup>

¶ Some people are quite intolerable to one by the way in which they insist that sympathy means looking at things as they do, without any feeling of real conviction. Now, to me, sympathy means understanding other people, and acting in accordance with one's perception, though neither one's feelings nor one's reason may approve of their condition. An abandonment of one's personality to another makes sympathy a quite useless gift. Yet that is the sort of sympathy which people most demand. They come in a defiant way and say, "You shall feel with me: you shall tell me that my feelings are the best, the noblest, the richest." I am afraid that I never look for more than a modified approval of my own doings. In proportion as a man is really worth consulting, he will show his appreciation of my difficulties, but will suggest, without expressing, a more excellent way in the future.<sup>2</sup>

2. Let us be sure that we have the right *motive*. Mere human sympathy, however strong, wears itself out; it is at least half physical in its nature, and its energy shares the vicissitudes and decay of our bodily frame. One motive only—the love of God—really lasts; and of the love of God, the love of man, whom God has loved so well as to create and to redeem him, is in reality the consequence and the attestation.

¶ What we have to be on our guard against is not the versatility itself, but a wrong motive, or the absence of a good one to direct it. This is well illustrated by the different forms which versatility took in the history of the Greeks. In the age of Pericles it was the great Hellenic virtue, on the excellence of which the Greek prided himself. "It was a happy and graceful flexibility." Freedom from prejudice, freedom from stiffness, openness of mind, amiability of manners, clearness and propriety of language—all these seem to have had their part in that which enabled the Athenian, without loss of earnestness or "relaxation of moral force," to become all things to all men. In the age of Aristotle this versatility is still a grace, but a subordinate grace, of character. It is now little more than an elegant accomplishment, which the Athenian gentleman, enveloped in a sense of dignity and self-importance, cultivates only that he may avoid the unpleasant extremes of buffoonery and boorishness. Four

<sup>1</sup> H. P. Liddon, *Clerical Life and Work*, 318.

<sup>2</sup> *Life and Letters of Mandell Creighton*, i. 271.

hundred years later the same word appears in the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians, and lo, it is coupled with filthiness and foolish talking; it is the "jesting" which is not convenient. Wherein then does the flexibility of St. Paul differ from the frivolity and fickleness of the Ionians of Asia Minor? Simply and solely in the motive which actuated him. It was when Greece lost its reality, its earnestness, when its moral fibre became relaxed, that this grace of character became hateful and contemptible.<sup>1</sup>

3. The principle of adaptation when applied to Christian work gives no sanction to the satanic doctrine that the end justifies the means. St. Paul wore different characters only so long as he could wear them consistently with his Christianity. There must be no infidelity to conscience, no compromise with wrong, no overcoming evil with evil, though we might think that we could save souls thereby. The motives of the Jesuits and Inquisitors were often of the purest, but they defiled themselves by the use of means that were nothing short of diabolical. The conversion of a sinner from the error of his ways will not hide any sins that may be committed in the process. Nothing is justifiable in Christian work which is not justifiable elsewhere. There must be no sharp practice. Christ drives the traffickers out of the Temple, though the Temple may make a profit from their gains.

¶ Some days before, the missionary had used the same device (*industrie*) for baptizing a little boy six or seven years old. His father, who was very sick, had several times refused to receive baptism; and when asked if he would not be glad to have his son baptized, he had answered, *No*. "At least," said Father Pijart, "you will not object to my giving him a little sugar." "No; but you must not baptize him." The missionary gave it to him once; then again; and at the third spoonful, before he had put the sugar into the water, he let a drop of it fall on the child, at the same time pronouncing the sacramental words. A little girl, who was looking at him, cried out, "Father, he is baptizing him!" The child's father was much disturbed; but the missionary said to him, "Did you not see that I was giving him sugar?" The child died soon after; but God showed His grace to the father, who is now in perfect health.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. L. Moore, *The Message of the Gospel*, 31.

<sup>2</sup> Le Mercier, *Relation des Hurons* (quoted in Parkman, *The Jesuits in North America*, i. 186).

4. In work among the lowest classes, while we may conform to their wishes, we must be sure that we ourselves fall into no sin, such as the sin of irreverence, which is sometimes committed by those who try to attract them. In work among people of higher social position, while we may be anxious that our mode of worship and our style of preaching shall in no way shock a refined taste, we must beware lest we gloss over or tone down any truths that are likely to be unwelcome. It may sometimes be our duty to declare truths that are utterly opposed to the most inveterate convictions of those to whom we speak. We must not be unfaithful to our own consciences for fear of offending the sensibilities of anybody. Even St. Paul, the model of tact and adaptation, did not hesitate to reason before the licentious governor Felix of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.

¶ On one occasion (writes a gentleman who knew Robertson well at Cheltenham) he had been asked to preach at a church where the congregation was chiefly composed of those whom Pope describes as passing from "a youth of frolics" to "an old age of cards." I accompanied him, and listened curiously for his text. It was this, "Love not the world, nor the things of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The sermon was most impressive and eloquent, and bold in its denunciation. Returning home, he asked me if I thought he was right in preaching it. I answered that it was very truthful; but, considering the character of the clergyman whose pulpit he occupied by courtesy, and the character of the congregation, not a discreet sermon. It might have been as truthful without apparently setting both minister and people at defiance. "You are quite right, quite right," he answered; "but the truth was this: I took two sermons with me into the pulpit, uncertain which to preach; but, just as I had fixed upon the other, something seemed to say to me, 'Robertson, you are a craven, you dare not speak here what you believe'; and I immediately pulled out the sermon that you heard, and preached it as you heard it."<sup>1</sup>

5. We must never sacrifice convictions to expediency. St. Paul's sympathy even with his opponents, and his great tenderness for the bigoted, the scrupulous, the superstitious, are the more remarkable in a man of such deep, strong, definite convictions. Assuredly he never accepted the hateful maxim that to

<sup>1</sup> S. A. Brooke, *Life and Letters of the Rev. F. W. Robertson*, 71.

understand everything is to condone everything. No one held more tenaciously to the sacredness of principle and the certainty of truth. Yet he would go almost any length, short of compromising principle, if by any means he might win over his antagonists. In particular he was ready to waive his own personal rights and to sacrifice his individual liberties in all matters that did not involve evil, on the chance that by so doing he might influence some soul for good. General Gordon wrote: "Daily I am more convinced that the non-assertion of one's rights is a great gain, though only to be acquired by a closer union with Christ."

¶ Of Bishop Moberly, Keble says, "There is nobody, I feel sure, nobody on earth, who can exactly take the part which he did, with his sweet and noble and, as I always thought, *royal* ways: not giving up an inch of principle, yet known to be the friend of every one and making all friends to one another."<sup>1</sup>

¶ Ideal tolerance necessarily is of extreme rarity because it virtually implies an amicable meeting of apparent contradictories—Belief, and sympathy with Unbelief. Superstition and infallibility may tolerate—"just endure"—Jews, Turks, and Infidels. Indifferentism suffers with good-humoured contemptuousness a babel of Creeds. The genuinely tolerant, whatever the origin of his faith, has made it his personal possession, has converted himself to it.<sup>2</sup>

6. But we may sacrifice almost everything else. Yield in a thousand little things that the great things may be urged. Nothing on earth is so winning, so subduing, as the spectacle of a man who forgets all his self-importance for the sake of doing good to others. The real triumphs of the Gospel involve the humility and self-suppression and self-effacement of its preachers. And the Gospel of Love can prevail only as it is preached lovingly, with endless tenderness and tolerance and patience and long-suffering. In one of Cowper's letters to John Newton we read: "No man was ever scolded out of his sins," or, let us add, persecuted out of his prejudices and errors and superstitions.

¶ A sermon was preached before the Irish House of Commons in 1725 by Edward Synge on the anniversary of the rebellion. The preacher was prebendary of St. Patrick and son of that Archbishop Synge who for many years exercised a great influence

<sup>1</sup> C. A. E. Moberly, *Dulce Domum*, 165.

<sup>2</sup> W. Stebbing, *Three Essays*, 10.



over all Irish policy, and it was published by order of the House. Taking for his text the words "Compel them to enter in," which had been so often employed in justification of persecution, and adopting substantially the reasoning of Locke and of Hoadly, Synge proceeded to examine with considerable ability the duty of a Protestant Legislature in dealing with a Roman Catholic population. Coercion, he maintained, which is directed simply against religious teaching as such, is always illegitimate and useless. Its only good end could be to release men from error, but this involves a change of judgment, which cannot be effected by external force. "All persons, therefore, in a society, whose principles in religion have no tendency to hurt the public, have a right to toleration."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> W. E. H. Lecky, *A History of Ireland*, i. 304.



FOR THE CROWN.

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## FOR THE CROWN.

And every man that striveth in the games is temperate in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.—1 Cor. ix. 25.

So, says St. Paul, praising the effort and contemning the prize, "they do it to receive a corruptible crown." And yet there was a soul of goodness in this evil thing. Though these festivals were indissolubly intertwined with idolatry, and besmirched with much sensuous evil, yet he deals with them as he does with war and with slavery—he points to the disguised nobility that lay beneath the hideousness, and holds up even these low things as a pattern for Christian men.

1. One of the most famous of the Greek athletic festivals was held close by Corinth. Its prize was a pine-wreath from the neighbouring sacred grove. The painful abstinence and training of ten months, and the fierce struggle of ten minutes, had for their result a twist of green leaves that withered in a week, and a little fading fame that was worth scarcely more, and lasted scarcely longer. The struggle and the discipline were noble; the end was contemptible. And so it is with all lives whose aims are lower than the highest. They are greater in the powers they put forth than in the objects they compass, and the question, "What is it for?" is like a douche of cold water from the cart that lays the clouds of dust in the ways.

2. There is both comparison and contrast here. Comparison, because there is between the athlete and the Christian a likeness upon which the Apostle is very fond of dwelling. Both have entered the lists; both have engaged in a contest wherein a vast amount of resolution and endurance is needed; both have set their hearts upon a certain prize. Contrast, because there is

between the athlete and the Christian this great difference, among others, that the prize is of little worth in the one case, of unspeakable value in the other. "*They* do it to receive a corruptible crown, but *we* an incorruptible."

## I.

## THE DISCIPLINE.

1. *Strenuous effort*.—If people would work half as hard to gain the highest object that a man can set before him as hundreds of people are ready to do in order to gain trivial and paltry objects, there would be fewer stunted and half-dead Christians among us. "That is the way to run," says St. Paul, "if you want to obtain."

Look at the contrast that he hints at, between the prize that stirs these racers' energies into such tremendous operation and the prize which Christians profess to be pursuing. "They do it to receive a corruptible crown"—a twist of pine branch out of the neighbouring grove, worth half-a-farthing, and a little passing glory not worth much more. They do it to obtain a corruptible crown; we do *not* do it, though we professedly have an incorruptible one as our aim and object. If we contrast the relative values of the objects that men pursue so eagerly with the objects of the Christian course, surely we ought to be smitten down with penitent consciousness of our own unworthiness, if not of our own hypocrisy.

¶ Everybody knows about the athlete, and knows that whatever he goes in for, there is no mistake about it. You cannot play cricket, or football, or anything else—to any purpose—with half your strength, or with half your heart. To do anything, to distinguish yourself in the least, you have to give yourself up to it. Everything else must give way; and everything that hinders, or enfeebles, or injuriously affects the play, must be given up. Everybody knows that. "*They do it*," says the Apostle; they really *do* it; there is no humbug or pretence about it. If they play, they do not play at playing; they *do* it, and no mistake. It is possible to say that a man is a fool to make such efforts, and incur such sacrifices, in order to wear a cap of a certain colour, or be known as the champion in a certain game. But, at any rate, he has achieved something with much toil, and effort, and loss of rest, and after tremendous exertions; "*they do it*."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. Winterbotham.

¶ Here is a little kingdom, which we shall characterize as the kingdom of merely muscular competition. Men are going to try muscular force with their fellow-men,—they are going to have a boat race. You and I cannot walk along the river-side and instantly take into our heads the notion that we will have a spin with these men and beat them all. That can't be done. Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads even to athletic supremacy. The men are going into training; they are going to put themselves under tutors and governors; they are going to submit to a bill of fare and a course of discipline which you and I would take to very unkindly. But why are they going to do so? Because they have determined to take a higher seat in the kingdom of mere athletic exercise and enjoyment. Now it is a very strange thing that you, a man fourteen stones weight, cannot just get into the very first boat that comes in your way and outstrip the men who have been in drill and training and exercise for the last three months. But you cannot do so. As a mere matter of fact, a man who has been drilled, disciplined, exercised, will beat you, except a miracle be wrought for your advantage.<sup>1</sup>

2. *Rigid self-control.*—Every man that is striving for the mastery is “temperate in all things.” The discipline for runners and athletes was rigid. They had ten months of spare diet—no wine—hard gymnastic exercises every day, until not an ounce of superfluous flesh was upon their muscles, before they were allowed to run in the arena. And, says St. Paul, that is the example for us. They practised this rigid discipline and abstinence by way of preparation for the race, and after it was run they might dispense with the training. You and I have to practise rigid abstinence as part of the race, as a continuous necessity. They did not only abstain from bad things, they did not only avoid criminal acts of sensuous indulgence; they abstained from many perfectly legitimate things. So for us it is not enough to say, “I draw the line there, at this or that vice, and I will have nothing to do with these.” You will never make a growing Christian if abstinence from palpable sins only is your standard. You must lay aside every sin, of course, but also every weight. Many things are weights that are not sins; and if we are to run fast we must run light; and if we are to do any good in this world we have to live by rigid control and abstain from much that is perfectly legitimate, because, if we do not, we

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Parker.

shall fail in accomplishing the highest purposes for which we are here.

¶ Only on one occasion have I seen him angry, and I mention the circumstance now because I feel convinced that his lack of disciplinary power, which has been noted in the matter of his Harrow work, was due to excess rather than to defect of moral force. Conscious of his power, he was, I believe, afraid to let himself go, and so habitually exercised a severe self-restraint. It was in the early Peterborough days, as he and I were starting out for a walk, that, in passing through the passage, which was then being tiled, he remarked to the man at work that he was not laying the tiles straight. The man contradicted him, and then my father said something which seemed to annihilate the culprit. I was astonished at my father losing his temper, but more astonished still at the effect of his wrath: the man trembled and turned pale, and I thought he would be falling down dead.<sup>1</sup>

The perfect poise that comes of self-control,  
The poetry of action, rhythmic, sweet,—  
That unvexed music of the body and soul

That the Greeks dreamed of, made at last complete.—  
Our stumbling lives attain not such a bliss;  
Too often, while the air we vainly beat,  
Love's perfect law of liberty we miss.<sup>2</sup>

3. *Concentration of aim.*—There are few things more lacking in the average Christian life of to-day than resolute, conscious concentration upon an aim which is clearly and always before us. Do you know what you are aiming at? This is the first question. Have you a distinct theory of life's purpose that you can put into half a dozen words, or have you not? In the one case, there is some chance of attaining your object; in the other, none. Alas! we find many Christian people who do not set before themselves, with emphasis and constancy, as their aim the doing of God's will, and so sometimes they do it, when it happens to be easy, and sometimes, when temptations are strong, they do not. It needs a strong hand on the tiller to keep it steady when the wind is blowing in puffs and gusts, and sometimes the sail bellies full and sometimes it is almost empty. The various strengths of the temptations that blow us out of our course are

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott*, i. 351.

<sup>2</sup> Annie Matheson.



such that we shall never keep a straight line of direction—which is the shortest line, and the only one on which we shall “obtain”—unless we know very distinctly where we want to go, and have a good strong will that has learned to say “No!” when the temptations come.

¶ It is not enough to have earned our livelihood. Either the earning itself should have been serviceable to mankind, or something else must follow. To live is sometimes very difficult, but it is never meritorious in itself; and we must have a reason to allege to our own conscience why we should continue to exist upon this crowded earth. If Thoreau had simply dwelt in his house at Walden, a lover of trees, birds, and fishes, and the open air and virtue, a reader of wise books, an idle, selfish self-improver, he would have managed to cheat Admetus, but, to cling to metaphor, the devil would have had him in the end. Those who can avoid toil altogether and dwell in the Arcadia of private means, and even those who can, by abstinence, reduce the necessary amount of it to some six weeks a year, having the more liberty, have only the higher moral obligation to be up and doing in the interest of man.<sup>1</sup>

Doth life resemble clouds that come and go?  
Or fitful sparks that but a moment glow?

Not so!

Man's life is vast and deeper than the sea,  
His purpose giveth birth to destiny,  
He moulds and carves his own futurity.

Is life a senseless weary wail of woe?  
A glittering bubble such as babes might blow?

Not so!

Life's meaning is as lofty as the sky,  
It stirs the heart to action pure and high,  
It thrills the human breast with ecstasy.

Is life a noxious weed which whirlwinds sow?  
A useless flint o'er which the waters flow?

Not so!

A life well spent has not its weight in gold,  
It is the clearest crystal earth doth hold,  
A gem beside which suns seem dull and cold.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. L. Stevenson, *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*.

<sup>2</sup> Gustav Spiller.

## II.

## THE REWARD.

Christianity is sometimes charged with being a long-sighted worldliness. We are told that the enjoyment many Christians expect is just as worldly as the enjoyments which they now reject. The only difference between such Christians and worldly folk is not in the character of the crowns they seek but in the season when they wear them. The crowns are the same; but the worldly man wears his now, the Christian hopes to wear it hereafter. Now is that accusation entirely ill-founded? Are our conceptions of the future weighted and coloured by the worldliness which we have professed to reject? How are our thoughts of the future shaped? How do we talk about it? We sometimes speak of the unfairness with which things are distributed in this life. Wealth seems to be showered upon the undeserving. The deserving seem often to be kept in straits. From this we argue that there must be a future life to make this fair. If there be no future life, then the constitution of the world is monstrously unjust. Let us look at that. Let us assume that in this world the good always became the rich, and the wicked always became the poor; would the arrangement be perfectly fitting and just? If goodness were always paid for by money would you consider the traffic conducive to moral and spiritual health? This worldly and materialistic conception of crowns and rewards eats away the very strength and sweetness of our religion. We are wanting material crowns as a reward for saintliness, and they will not be given in this world or in the world to come. God has other crowns more precious and incorruptible, and He is lavish in the bestowal of them.

¶ The *prize system* has frequently been denounced as unworthy and degrading, and there is a grain of truth in the charge. The danger is that the child may work solely for the prize, and not for the sake of knowledge. We have the same danger in the religious sphere when rewards of any kind are promised. Certain it is that rewards for well-doing are wrong and hurtful when they are of such a nature as to evoke a greedy or mercenary spirit, and it is equally certain that no man or woman should do right simply for the sake of reward. The higher we go in the sphere of rewards, the more spiritual they become, until they

cease altogether to be mercenary. The soldier values the Victoria Cross far more than any pecuniary reward. The artist values your admiration more than the price you give for his pictures. No amount of money, however great, can ever be an equivalent of a brave deed or a great work of art.<sup>1</sup>

¶ If a religion were revealed to us to-morrow, proving, scientifically and with absolute certainty, that every act of goodness, of self-sacrifice, of heroism, of inward nobility would bring us, immediately after our death, an indubitable and unimaginable reward, I doubt whether the proportion of good and evil, of virtues and vices amid which we live would undergo an appreciable change. Would you have a convincing example? In the middle ages there were moments when faith was absolute and obtruded itself with a certainty that corresponds exactly with our scientific certainties. The rewards promised for well-doing, the punishments threatening evil were, in the thoughts of the men of that time, as tangible, so to speak, as would be those of the revelation of which I spoke above. Nevertheless, we do not see that the average of goodness was raised. A few saints sacrificed themselves for their brothers, carried certain virtues, selected from among the more contestable, to the pitch of heroism; but the bulk of men continued to deceive one another, to lie, to fornicate, to steal, to be guilty of envy, to commit murder. The mean of the vices was no lower than that of to-day. On the contrary, life was incomparably harsher, more cruel and more unjust, because the low-water mark of the general intelligence was less high.<sup>2</sup>

¶ The feeble soul that may be lured to love and service by the promise of reward is unworthy to be enrolled in the regiment of Heaven. We needs must follow with assent the words in which the Saint disclaims with poignant ardour all thought of personal advantage, the desire of Heaven and the fear of Hell being alike blotted out in the burning radiance of devotion: "Thou drawest me, my God. . . . Thy death agony draws me; Thy love draws me, so that, should there be no Heaven, I would love Thee. Were there no Hell, I would fear thee."<sup>3</sup>

¶ The symbol of the Gospel is a cross; but not a cross by itself; not a lone, bare, gaunt, naked cross. The symbol of the Gospel is a crown; but not a crown by itself; not a proud, cold, despotic, selfish, pitiless crown. The symbol of the Gospel is

<sup>1</sup> David Watson, *In Life's School*, 160.

<sup>2</sup> Maurice Maeterlinck, *Life and Flowers*, 100.

<sup>3</sup> Lady Dilke, *The Book of the Spiritual Life*, 167.

a cross and a crown; a cross lying in a crown; a crown growing around a cross; a cross haloed by a crown; a crown won by a cross.<sup>1</sup>

I sorrowed that the golden day was dead,  
 Its light no more the countryside adorning;  
 But whilst I grieved, behold!—the East grew red  
 With morning.

I sighed that merry Spring was forced to go,  
 And doff the wreaths that did so well become her;  
 But whilst I murmured at her absence, lo!  
 'Twas Summer.

I mourned because the daffodils were killed  
 By burning skies that scorched my early posies;  
 But whilst for these I pined, my hands were filled  
 With roses.

Half broken-hearted I bewailed the end  
 Of friendships than which none had once seemed nearer;  
 But whilst I wept I found a newer friend,  
 And dearer.

And thus I learned old pleasures are estranged  
 Only that something better may be given;  
 Until at last we find this earth exchanged  
 For Heaven.<sup>2</sup>

1. *The corruptible crown.*—Think of the corruptible crowns which are to so many the objects of a fond ambition. How many are seeking the tinselled crowns of gaiety, their daily luxury being found in the thin enjoyment of the world! How corruptible is the crown! The first cold shower that falls occasions its destruction. One of the most pitiful sights to be seen is that of a gay and shallow woman plunged into some sudden sorrow. She is like a butterfly in the rain. How many others are seeking the crown of fame! How many are possessed with the burning desire to be recognized, to be esteemed, to be influential, to be remembered. Yet how corruptible is the crown! Of how very few can it be said that their fame lasts as long as their gravestones. When the clock strikes the last stroke of the

<sup>1</sup> James I. Vance, *Tendency*, 207.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler.

hour, there is a lingering and decreasing reverberation before the sound quite dies out. That reverberation represents a man's posthumous fame, the short lingering remembrance that follows the final stroke of his life. If a man wins fame, he wins a corruptible crown. Others seek the crown of wealth. All they want is money. They measure their success by money. It is their standard and their crown. Yet how corruptible! "The wind passeth over it, and it is gone." It is the prey of many foes. The moth can destroy it. The rust can corrupt it. The thief can steal it. These are types of the crowns admired by the world, coveted by the world, sought by the world, and they are all corruptible. If a man gains one he is regarded as having had a successful career.

¶ The King [William IV.] ought not properly to have worn the crown, never having been crowned; but when he was in the robing-room he said to Lord Hastings, "Lord Hastings, I wear the crown; where is it?" It was brought to him, and when Lord Hastings was going to put it on his head he said, "Nobody shall put the crown on my head but myself." He put it on, and then turned to Lord Grey and said, "Now, my Lord, the coronation is over." George Villiers said that in his life he never saw such a scene, and as he looked at the King upon the throne with the crown loose upon his head, and the tall, grim figure of Lord Grey close beside him, with the sword of state in his hand, it was as if the King had got his executioner by his side, and the whole picture looked strikingly typical of his and our future destinies.<sup>1</sup>

I saw a truant schoolboy chalk his name  
 Upon the Temple door; then with a shout  
 Run off; that night a weary beggar came,  
 Leant there his ragged back and rubbed it out.<sup>2</sup>

2. *The incorruptible crown.*—The Christian's crown is elsewhere spoken of as a crown of life, a crown of glory, and a crown of righteousness.

(1) *The incorruptible crown is a crown of life.*—If you want a summary of Biblical teaching respecting virtue and its crowns, you may find it in the Book of Revelation—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." A

<sup>1</sup> *The Greville Memoirs*, ii. 140.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Murray, *Hamewith*, 54.



crown of life! Your physician examines your body, the healthy workings of which have somehow or other become clogged with disease. He finds out the obstruction, ascertains its character, discovers its root. Then practically he says to the patient, "Attend to my instructions, loyally follow my prescriptions, be faithful to my word, and I will drive the disease out of your body and give your body a crown of life." The reward of obedience is health, fresh, vigorous health, a crown of life! That is precisely what the Lord says to us about our souls. He says to me, Be thou faithful. Be loyal in My service. Be scrupulously obedient to My will, and I will heal thee of all thy diseases. I will remove all thy moral sicknesses and spiritual infirmities. I will give thee moral and spiritual health, make thee every whit alive—thou shalt have a crown of life! That is the reward of obedience and faithfulness—the incorruptible crown of life. The reward for doing a good deed is that you have more life to do another. That is the meaning of Christ's benediction upon the faithful servant—"Thou hast been faithful over a few things." His faithfulness had crowned him with life. He had greater life for doing greater service. At first he had only life enough for "few things," but faithfulness had given him life enough for more. "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things."

Have you ever noticed closely that gracious list of beatitudes which Jesus tells us are the special possession and reward of the Christian life? How august are the payments! How incorruptible the crowns! Look at one or two. "Blessed are the merciful." Why are they blessed? What is their reward, their crown? "They shall obtain mercy." Beautifully suited is the crown to the virtue. God will give their hearts the same sweet feast as they have given to the heart of their fellows. "Blessed are the pure in heart." In what consists their blessedness? What is their reward? "They shall see God." How incorruptible the crown! And how appropriate that purity should be rewarded by visions, that they who have washed their eyes clean and clear should be able to feast them upon the beauty and glory of God! "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." Whence comes their blessedness? What is their reward? "They shall be filled." Their spiritual hunger



shall meet with spiritual satisfaction. The hunger for life shall receive the bread of life. The thirst for life shall receive the water of life.

¶ I think I know many people who are already wearing the crowns in their hearts. It seems to me that there are many people from whom God has only to strip away their robes of flesh, and they will stand before Him—crowned! I think you must know such men and women, who have reached the west, and the brightness of whose crowns shines through their attenuated flesh. They wear the crown of humility, the crown of patience, the crown of brotherly kindness, the crown of hope, the crown of love. Do you think any one will be able to wear brighter crowns than these in the Kingdom of God? Do you think that in all heaven there is a brighter crown than the crown of love? It is the crown worn by the great God Himself! These are the crowns we must seek, the incorruptible crowns. Let us seek for such character as will be to us a worthy crown. Let us become more spiritual. Let us inspect our purposes and ambitions, and make it our one aim to be found at last in Christ, in possession of the righteousness which is of God by faith. Let us consecrate ourselves to one holy and supreme ambition, to wake at last in the likeness of our God.<sup>1</sup>

How many a Grecian youth of old,  
 Preparing for the Isthmian plain,  
 And driven by thirst of fame, was bold  
 For discipline that he might gain  
 An athlete's vigour well-controlled,  
 And win the olive crown through pain!

But, when in time of wrinkled age  
 His earlier force had ebbed away,  
 And, closing now his pilgrimage,  
 He viewed the wreath's forlorn decay,  
 Then he at last grew wise to gauge  
 The fleeting worth of glory's day.

Therefore shall we give precious years  
 And sacred energies of soul  
 To win the world's resounding cheers  
 And triumph at its vaunted goal?  
 Nay, such a guerdon calms no fears  
 When Doomsday's awful thunders roll!

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Jowett.

But rather may the second sight  
 Of Faith disclose the prize unseen,  
 And urge us, led by its delight  
 To tame the sins, that intervene,  
 And fight with joy a nobler fight  
 For crowns of never-fading green !<sup>1</sup>

(2) *A crown of glory.*—It is a crown of glory, and that means a lustrousness of character imparted by radiation and reflection from the central light of the glory of God. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Our eyes are dim, but we can at least divine the far-off flashing of that great light, and may ponder upon what hidden depths and miracles of transformed perfectness and unimagined lustre wait for us, dark and limited as we are here, in the assurance that we all shall be changed into the "likeness of the body of his glory."

The promise of an incorruptible crown is not only for this life but also for the life to come. Here we have the promise of life, that fuller life which men want, "the life of which our veins are scant," even in the fullest tide and heyday of earthly existence. But the promise sets that future over against the present, as if then first should men know what it means to live: so buoyant, elastic, unwearied shall be their energies, so manifold the new outlets for activity, and the new inlets for the surrounding glory and beauty; so incorruptible and glorious shall be their new being. Here we live a living death; there we shall live indeed; and that will be the crown, not only in regard to physical, but also in regard to spiritual, powers and consciousness.

But remember that all this full tide of life is Christ's gift. There is no such thing as natural immortality; there is no such thing as independent life. All Being, from the lowest creature up to the loftiest created spirit, exists by one law, the continual impartation to it of life from the fountain of life, according to its capacities. And unless Jesus Christ, all through the eternal ages of the future, imparted to the happy souls that sit garlanded at His board the life by which they live, the wreaths would wither on their brows, and the brows would melt away, and dissolve from beneath the wreaths. "I will give him a crown of life."

<sup>1</sup> G. T. S. Farquhar.

¶ There is a pathetic and beautiful story related of Jenny Lind—Madame Goldschmidt. Her innate religious feeling caused her to leave the stage at the height of her extraordinary triumph. Some time after, an English friend found her at a seaside retreat. The famous artiste was “sitting on the steps of a bathing-machine, on the sands, with a Lutheran Bible open on her knee, and looking out into the glory of a sunset that was shining over the waters.” The friends talked “and the talk drew near to the inevitable question, ‘Oh, Madame Goldschmidt, how was it that you ever came to abandon the stage at the very height of your success?’ ‘When, every day,’ was the quiet answer, ‘it made me think less of this (laying a finger on the Bible), and nothing at all of that (pointing out to the sunset), what could I do?’”<sup>1</sup>

(3) *A crown of righteousness.*—It is a crown of righteousness. Though that phrase may mean the wreath that rewards righteousness, it seems more in accordance with the other similar expressions to regard it, too, as the material of which the crown is composed. It is not enough that there should be festal gladness, not enough that there should be calm repose, not enough that there should be flashing glory, not enough that there should be fulness of life. To accord with the intense moral earnestness of the Christian system there must be, emphatically, in the Christian hope, cessation of all sin and investiture with all purity. The word means the same thing as the ancient promise, “Thy people shall be all righteous.” It means the same thing as the latest promise of the ascended Christ, “They shall walk with me in white.” And it sets the very climax and culmination on the other hopes, declaring that absolute, stainless, infallible righteousness which one day shall belong to our weak and sinful spirits.

¶ I love Dinah next to my own children. An’ she makes one feel safer when she’s i’ the house; for she’s like the driven snow: anybody might sin for two as had her at their elbow.<sup>2</sup>

¶ Since the beginning of history thoughtful men have been asking what is man’s *summum bonum*, his highest good, his heart’s true ideal. “Power,” “wealth,” “pleasure,” “wisdom,” “culture,” are some of the answers. The true answer is “God.” “I have no good beyond Thee,” said one who had learned the secret. “Lord, give me Thyself,” was Augustine’s constant prayer; and he adds the exquisite reason, “*Habet omnia qui habet habentem omnia*,”—“he has all who has Him that has all.”

<sup>1</sup> W. J. Lacey, *Masters of To-morrow*, 210.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Poyser, in *Adam Bede*.

Slowly or suddenly we rise from delight in God's gifts to delight in Himself. "Unless," says Hooker, "the last good, which is desired for itself, be infinite, we do evil making it our end. No good is infinite but God; therefore He is our felicity and bliss." Every soul has capacities greater than the infinite sea, and only He who filleth heaven and earth, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, can satisfy one little human heart.<sup>1</sup>

Mysterious Death! who in a single hour  
Life's gold can so refine;  
And by thy art divine  
Change mortal weakness to immortal power!

Bending beneath the weight of eighty years,  
Spent with the noble strife  
Of a victorious life,  
We watched her fading heavenward, through our tears.

But, ere the sense of loss our hearts had wrung,  
A miracle was wrought,  
And swift as happy thought  
She lived again, brave, beautiful, and young.

Age, Pain, and Sorrow dropped the veils they wore,  
And showed the tender eyes  
Of angels in disguise,  
Whose discipline so patiently she bore.

The past years brought their harvest rich and fair,  
While Memory and Love  
Together fondly wove  
A golden garland for the silver hair.

How could we mourn like those who are bereft,  
When every pang of grief  
Found balm for its relief  
In counting up the treasure she had left?—

Faith that withstood the shocks of toil and time,  
Hope that defied despair,  
Patience that conquered care,  
And loyalty whose courage was sublime;

<sup>1</sup> J. Strachan. *Hebrew Ideals*, i. 75.

The great deep heart that was a home for all,  
Just, eloquent and strong,  
In protest against wrong;  
Wide charity that knew no sin, no fall;

The Spartan spirit that made life so grand,  
Mating poor daily needs  
With high, heroic deeds,  
That wrested happiness from Fate's hard hand.

We thought to weep, but sing for joy instead,  
Full of the grateful peace  
That followed her release;  
For nothing but the weary dust lies dead.

Oh, noble woman! never more a queen  
Than in the laying down  
Of sceptre and of crown,  
To win a greater kingdom yet unseen,

Teaching us how to seek the highest goal,  
To earn the true success;  
To live, to love, to bless,  
And make death proud to take a royal soul.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Louisa May Alcott.





TRUST IN GOD AND DO THE RIGHT.

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## TRUST IN GOD AND DO THE RIGHT.

God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it.—1 Cor. x. 13.

1. THE reason for our confidence that every temptation can be overcome is that God is faithful. "God is faithful," says the Apostle, "who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it." Notice, the Apostle does not give as his reason for confidence that man is strong, but that God is faithful. Men who have faced temptation confiding only in their own strength have come to grief. It is the men who, distrustful of self, have leaned upon God who have come off more than conquerors.

2. Should we be disposed at any time to doubt this, we may reassure ourselves by remembering how God's faithfulness is guaranteed.

(1) God cannot be true to His purpose of grace and yet allow us to be overcome by the sheer weight and pressure of evil without a possibility of escape. For what is the purpose which we see revealed in the gift of Christ? It is that we may be saved from sin; and salvation from sin implies that we shall be strengthened against the temptations by which it seeks to prevail. God is faithful to His purpose, and His purpose is to save and keep all those who put their trust in Him. He never departs from this. He has it always before Him. It is the end to which He makes everything subordinate. He is never off His guard, never asleep, never too busily engaged to attend to the wants of the very least of His children. Sin can lurk nowhere without being detected by His all-seeing eye. It can

devise no stratagem without being clearly visible to Him. Still less can it strike down or fatally wound any who look to Him for help.

(2) But not only would it be inconsistent with His purpose of grace were God to suffer overwhelming evil to assail us, it would also place Him in contradiction to Himself. His nature is to love goodness supremely, and He has pledged Himself by the gift of His Son to leave nothing undone to give it the victory. But if He were to stand aside, and see us beaten down by sin without interposing; if He were to allow temptations to muster in irresistible force; this would not only defeat His manifested purpose, but destroy His character for holiness. The very fact that God is good, that He loves and cherishes with a compassionate eye every movement of a human soul to purity and truth, involves His doing everything that wisdom, and power, and pity can do to make us triumphant over sin.

¶ When man thus considers the wealth and the marvellous sublimity of the Divine nature, and all the manifold gifts which He grants and offers to His creatures, amazement is stirred up in his spirit at the sight of so manifold a wealth and majesty; at the sight of the immense faithfulness of God to all His creatures. This causes a strange joy of spirit, and a boundless trust in God, and this inward joy surrounds and penetrates all the forces of the souls in the secret places of the spirit.<sup>1</sup>

¶ A beautiful instance is recorded in the life of Catherine of Siena. The plague was abroad, and Father Matthew, the Director of the Hospital, caught the infection while ministering to a dying person. The next day he was carried like a corpse, livid and strengthless, from the chapel to his room. The physician said that every symptom announced the approach of death. But Catherine loved him sincerely, and when she heard of his illness she went to his room and cried with a cheerful voice, "Get up, Father Matthew! Get up!" As she left the house, another friend—Raymond of Capua—was entering, and said to her, "Will you allow a person so dear to us, and so useful to others, to die? I know your secrets, and I know that *you obtain from God whatsoever you ask in faith.*" She bowed her head, and, after a few moments, looked him in the face with her countenance radiant with joy, and said, "Well, let us take courage; he will not die this time." The good Father immediately recovered, and sat down to a light meal with his friends, chatting and laughing gaily with them.

<sup>1</sup> M. Maeterlinck, *Ruysbroeck and the Mystics*, 140.

Catherine believed in the promise, "The prayer of faith shall save the sick." She was bold in appealing to the truthfulness of the Divine Healer, and she was not disappointed. "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God; the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him" (Deut. vii. 9). We very seldom put the veracity of God to the test. But the more we venture on Him and on His gracious words, the stronger and clearer is our faith bound to become.<sup>1</sup>

¶ I sometimes think that in the case of those who are not tried by sharp outward temptations to break God's commandments, the trial may come in inward temptations to distrust His grace. It would be a bad business for us if we were not tried in some way.<sup>2</sup>

¶ There are two possible ways of looking upon trial. The first is that God is angry with the sufferer and is taking His revenge. It is a view old as the fears and the morbidness of man. The friends of Job are its champions in every generation. It seems so obvious to those who hold it that few of them give any pains to think it out to its issues, or realize how small a God this of theirs must be. Those who seriously believe in God at all will have little difficulty in passing to the second way of looking upon trial, and if their faith is worthy of the name, it will be quite as obvious as the former. Once seen it can never again be doubted, though it may sometimes require a strong effort to realize and hold by it. When we hear that certain troops have been sent into the most dangerous and trying post on the battlefield, how do we judge of them? Is it that their general has wished to punish them, or is it not rather that he believed in them best of all? And is not such confidence an honour greater than all other praise? To look at life under that light is to be done with fears and doubts. And along with that we take the further assurance that God sends no man into any battle that he may fall. None of all His troops are ever sacrificed to the exigencies of the field.<sup>3</sup>

And this shalt thou know most surely, God breaketh His faith with none.

Teach thy thoughts ne'er from Him to wander, since Himself and His ways are One."

3. "God is faithful," says St. Paul, and proceeds to point

<sup>1</sup> J. A. Clapperton, *Culture of the Christian Heart*, 52.

<sup>2</sup> *The Life of R. W. Dale of Birmingham*, 544.

<sup>3</sup> J. Kelman, *Honour towards God*, 52.

out to the Corinthians the ways in which God's faithfulness is shown towards them in the matter of their temptations. He tells them (1) that God permits the temptation, suffers them to be tempted; (2) that He proportions the temptation to their strength of resistance, not suffering them to be tempted above that they are able; (3) that He provides the way of escape from every temptation. So we have

I. The Control of Temptation.

II. The Adjustment of Temptation.

III. The Escape from Temptation.

## I.

### THE CONTROL OF TEMPTATION.

The term "proof," "temptation," comprehends all that puts moral fidelity to the proof, whether this proof has for its end to manifest and strengthen the fidelity—it is in this sense that God can tempt,—or whether it seeks to make man fall into sin—it is in this sense that God cannot tempt, and that the devil always tempts. It may also happen that the same fact falls at once into these two categories, as, for example, the temptation of Job, which on the part of Satan had for its end to make him fall, and which God, on the contrary, permitted with the view of bringing out into clear manifestation the fidelity of His servant, and of raising him to a higher degree of holiness and of knowledge. There are even cases in which God permits Satan to tempt, not without consenting to his attaining his end of bringing into sin. So in the case of David. This is when the pride of man has reached a point such that it is a greater obstacle to salvation than the commission of a sin; God then makes use of a fall to break this proud heart by the humbling experience of its weakness.<sup>1</sup>

¶ When Jehovah asked the question: "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in all the earth?" Satan said, "Hast thou not put a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?" I am very thankful for Satan's own confession of the security of this servant of God. "The hedge was so high," says one of the old Puritans, "that the big demons could not get over it, and so thick that the little demons could not get through it."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> F. Godet, *Commentary on Corinthians*, ii. 70.

<sup>2</sup> J. G. Mantle.



1. Since God controls the temptation, and is testing us by it, we ought to bear it faithfully, believing in His faithfulness. We know God's faithfulness to us only when we are honestly faithful to ourselves. He is no paternal despot who will make us good by force; and no more shameful cry than that petulant demand exists. He preserves our independence; it is dear to Him; He will compel us to work out our own salvation with resolute labour, and in this more than in all else His faithfulness to us is shown. That fidelity is often stern enough, it inflicts our due penalties, it proves to us the weaknesses of our nature by the trials in which they break down, it reveals what is strong in us by testing it sometimes to the last strand of the rope, and we quiver under the severity of the test; but what is the worth of our manliness, and what the use of a long experience, unless we are sufficiently strong of heart to realize that faithfulness is often sternness, and love sometimes apparently cruel?

¶ We shall all be tempted, but the effects of the temptation depend upon ourselves. Fling into the same flame a lump of clay and a piece of gold, the clay will be hardened, the gold will melt; the heart of Pharaoh hardened into perfidious insolence, the soul of David melted into pathetic song. Bear temptation faithfully, and it will leave you not only unscathed, but nobler.<sup>1</sup>

O Beauteous things of earth!  
I cannot feel your worth  
To-day.

O kind and constant friend!  
Our spirits cannot blend  
To-day.

O Lord of truth and grace!  
I cannot see Thy face  
To-day.

A shadow on my heart  
Keeps me from all apart  
To-day.

Yet something in me knows  
How fair creation glows  
To-day.

<sup>1</sup> F. W. Farrar, *The Silence and the Voices of God*, 112.

And something makes me sure  
That love is not less pure  
To-day.

And that th' Eternal Good  
Minds nothing of my mood  
To-day.

For when the sun grows dark  
A sacred, secret spark  
Shoots rays.

Fed from a hidden bowl  
A Lamp burns in my soul  
All days.<sup>1</sup>

2. We must trust Him in the darkness of our temptation. He is faithful ; but to us in our blindness, ignorance, waywardness, He does not always seem so. To the strong man when he sits, despairing and stricken, amid the ruins of his life, to the father whose erring son causes him agony and shame—to these the sun shines not, and the stars give no light, the heavens above their heads are iron, and the earth beneath their feet is brass. Yet, how gently He heals even for these the wounds which His own loving hand has made ; how do the clouds break over them and the pale silver gleam of resignation brighten into the burning ray of faith and love. For our path in life is like that of the traveller who lands at the famous port of the Holy Land. He rides at first under the shade of palms, under the golden orange-groves, beside the crowded fountains with almonds and pomegranates breaking around him into blossom. Soon he leaves behind him these lovely groves ; he enters on the bare and open plain ; the sun burns over him, the dust-clouds whirl around him ; but even there the path is brodered by the quiet wayside flowers, and when at last the bleak bare hills succeed, his heart bounds within him, for he knows that he shall catch his first glimpse of the Holy City, as he stands weary on their brow.

There came a cloud ; it fell in shining showers.  
Lo ! from the earth sprang troops of radiant flowers.

<sup>1</sup> Charles G. Ames.

Grief o'er a joyous heart its shadow threw.  
Lo! in the darkness love's sweet graces grew.

The golden sun dropped sudden out of sight.  
Lo! silver stars made glorious the night.

Death came. The soul, affrighted at its guise,  
Was led protesting into Paradise.

3. Because God is faithful, He sends temptation to drive us to Himself. There is no escape from His love; no escape from the restlessness He will excite in our hearts till we find rest in Him. A thought will rise in our minds, we know not whence, a dim emotion kindle there which will seem to have no cause; they are the inspirations of God. In early times we have heard, as Samuel heard, His voice, and, unlike Samuel, we have forgotten. In after years, in issuing into life, we have met Him, in our first loneliness, as the infinite Inspirer. He has kindled in our hearts a fire of duty and hope and aspiration; but we have lost the music of that vision in the din of business and the clangour of the world. But He will not lose us; we forget, but not He. Again He comes to make our life shake in the tempest. If tenderness will not touch us, perhaps this stern education will. Therefore, there comes keen testing—"thrilling anguish," the death of earthly hopes, the hours in which life seems a dreadful dream out of which we cannot wake. For only so can some be awakened to feel that they are not their own, but God's; that the invisible is the real, and the visible unreal; that this world is, to us, children of immortality, no more than one flash of the shuttle through the loom, in comparison with the eternal world in which we are at one with Him.

¶ Many men are distressing themselves, when they think of their trials, by imagining that they must have done something wrong, or God never could have sent such afflictions to them personally or to their household. That is a mistake. There are trials that are simply tests, not punishments; trials of faith and patience, not rods sent to scourge men because they have been doing some particular evil thing. God's people are tried. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." The honour is not in the trial, it is in the spirit in which the trial is borne.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. Parker.

4. It is an awful thought, this unremitting faithfulness of God, for it means, if we resist Him, stern, unrelenting work upon us. It is in vain that we say to Him, "Let us alone, torment us not." He never takes offence; He has none of the jealousy of vanity; He is never unkind, though His strokes are hard; never wanting in swift reciprocation of the faintest utterance of love, the faintest cry for forgiveness; always ready to listen with tenderness, though wise enough not always to grant our prayer; always reasonable, always just, so that He can make excuse, can weigh the force of trial on our character, can understand the force of the circumstances which betrayed us into guilt. He knows all, and there is infinite comfort in that.

¶ You may assure your soul, when you are marching forward into the darkness of some valley of the shadow of death, that God would never have sent you to face that trial unless He had known that you could master it. Life is often difficult: it is never impossible for the man that has to live it. If the trial be very sore, if it shake your strength and strain your patience almost to the breaking-point, if the agony of conflict surprise you, then that only shows that you are stronger than you took yourself to be. Had you been unfit for it, this post of danger would never have been assigned to you. Your God has gauged your powers of resistance with exact knowledge, and the duty He shall set you will always be well within the limits of these powers.<sup>1</sup>

5. In the face of such faithfulness, we dare not do less than our best. It is a shame to sink wilfully below that which we know we ought to be. There are those who talk of their weakness, their yielding nature, as if it were something beautiful to be feeble; as if there were some poetical quality in giving way to that which they choose to call Fate; as if ideals were given them in order that they might sigh sentimentally over their unattainability, and not in order that they may pursue them with a resolute will. This is the infidelity of life—far worse than all else, when it is worst—turned into the ghost of an artistic dream and made the ground of vanity. Feebleness is never beautiful, and to choose feebleness as the rule of life is disgraceful in man or woman, however we may deck it with fine fancies. The real beauty of life is in health of mind, strength of will, vigour of purpose.

<sup>1</sup> J. Kelman, *Honour towards God*, 53.

The real poetry of life is in the noble effort which does not rest till it has accomplished its end; in the undying pursuit of that which we know to be best; in the battle for right; in the resolution and the power to live above the standard of the world; in the ravishment which is born of seeing truth, love, justice, purity, as they are seen by God; and in unresting, yet unhasting endeavour to become at one with them.

¶ Led by God's Spirit to the battle-ground, there is no assault in which any man is doomed to be defeated, and there is no temptation which it is impossible for a man to overcome. The conditions of life that tempt us are but the challenges that incite a man to assert his mastery. The lusts of the body, the pride of life, the meaner parts of human nature that offer a morbid pleasantness,—all that they can do at their worst is to give him the choice whether he shall respect himself or bow his neck. Let him remember that God has trusted him for this conflict also, trusted him to assert his best manhood, and to show its mastery. Let him remember that he is upon his honour, and that God counts on him to keep his honour bright as his sword.<sup>1</sup>

Was the trial sore?

Temptation sharp? Thank God a second time!  
 Why comes temptation but for man to meet  
 And master and make crouch beneath his foot,  
 And so be pedestaled in triumph? Pray  
 "Lead us into no such temptations, Lord!"  
 Yea, but, O Thou whose servants are the bold,  
 Lead such temptations by the head and hair,  
 Reluctant dragons, up to who dares fight,  
 That so he may do battle and have praise.<sup>2</sup>

## II.

### THE ADJUSTMENT OF TEMPTATION.

We are to believe that whatever our trial or temptation may be,—however heavy, however formidable,—it will, at least, never come in a light, random way to us. It is all measured before, and it is in strict order and proportion to something. He who made our body and our mind, and who knows exactly our every sensitive fibre, and the capacity of each—what each can and cannot endure—has fitted everything accurately to our

<sup>1</sup> J. Kelman, *Honour towards God*, 57.

<sup>2</sup> Browning.

constitution, to our circumstances, to our body, to our mind; and this sense of adaptation or proportion will of itself be an immense strength to us. It gives such dignity to affliction, and establishes at once a limit beyond which it can no more go than the sea can pass high-water mark. The mere knowing that there is a boundary line perfectly defined, though we do not see it, will give us courage to bear all that falls within that line. It will come to pass thus. It will sometimes happen to us to feel in our suffering—"If this trial were to go one inch further, I could not bear it; it would crush me." But it will never go that inch. We shall not be crushed.

¶ The words *beyond what ye are able* come as a surprise. Has man then some power? And, if the matter in question is what man can do with the Divine help, is not the power of this help without limit? But it must not be forgotten that, if the power of God is infinite, the receptivity of the believer is limited: limited by the measure of spiritual development which he has reached, by the degree of his love for holiness and of his zeal in prayer, etc. God knows this measure, St. Paul means to say, and He proportions the intensity of the temptation to the degree of power which the believer is capable of receiving from Him, as the mechanician, if we may be allowed such a comparison, proportions the heat of the furnace to the resisting power of the boiler.<sup>1</sup>

1. There are two factors in every temptation, the sinful heart within, the evil world without, and they stand to one another much in the relation of the powder-magazine and the lighted match. Temptation originates in the heart, says St. James, and that is absolutely true. The heart is the powder-magazine. But for the lusts raging there, the allurements of the world would be absolutely powerless for harm. Temptation comes from the sinful world, says St. Paul; that is also true. The world is the lighted match; but for the allurements and incitements of the world, the sinful desires of the heart would never be called into play. It is when the match is applied to the powder-magazine that danger arises. So the power of the temptation may vary and the power of resistance may vary.

2. There is no greater mystery of providence than the unequal proportions in which temptation is distributed. Some

<sup>1</sup> F. Godet.



are tempted comparatively little; others are thrown into a fiery furnace of it seven times heated. There are in the world sheltered situations in which a man may be compared to a ship in the harbour, where the waves may sometimes heave a little, but a real storm never comes; there are other men like the vessel which has to sail the high seas and face the full force of the tempest.

(1) That which is a temptation at one period of life may be no temptation at all at another. To a child there may be an irresistible temptation in a sweetmeat which a man would never think of touching; and some of the temptations which are now the most painful to us will in time be as completely outlived.

(2) One of the chief powers of temptation is the power of surprise. It comes when we are not looking for it; it comes from the person and from the quarter we least suspect. The day dawns which is to be the decisive one in our life; but it looks like any other day. No bell rings in the sky to give warning that the hour of destiny has come. But the good angel that watches over us is waiting and trembling. The fiery moment arrives; do we stand; do we fall?

(3) Every man has his own trials; and every condition and circumstance of life its own peculiar temptations. Solitude has its temptations as well as society. St. Anthony, before his conversion, was a gay and fast young man of Alexandria; and, when he was converted, he found the temptations of the city so intolerable that he fled into the Egyptian desert and became a hermit; but he afterwards confessed that the temptations of a cell in the wilderness were worse than those of the city. It would not be safe to exchange our temptations for those of another man; every one has his own.

¶ In speaking of *Knox's Rambles*, and the effects of association with men in sharpening the intellect, you remark that this seems inconsistent with the fact that great spirits have been nursed in solitude. Yes, but not the ploughman's solitude. Moses was forty years in Midian, but he had the education of Egypt before, and habits of thought and observation begun, as shown in his spirit of inquiry with regard to the burning forest. Usually, I suppose, the spark has been struck by some superior mind, either in conversation or through reading. Ferguson was, perhaps, an exception. Then, again, stirring times set such master-minds to

work even in this solitude, as in Cromwell's case. I remember, too, a line of Goethe's, in which he says:

Talent forms itself in solitude,  
Character in the storms of life.

But I believe both your positions are true. The soul collects its mightiest forces by being thrown in upon itself, and coerced solitude often matures the mental and moral character marvelously, as in Luther's confinement in the Wartburg. Or, to take a loftier example, Paul during his three years in Arabia; or, grander still, His solitude in the desert: the Baptist's too. But, on the other hand, solitude unbroken from earliest infancy, or with nothing to sharpen the mind, either by collision with other minds, or the expectation of some new sphere of action shortly, would, I suppose, rust the mental energies. Still there is the spirit to be disciplined, humbled, and strengthened, and it may gain in proportion as the mind is losing its sharpening education.<sup>1</sup>

¶ Trench, in his poem "The Monk and Bird," shows that the very blessedness of the consecrated life may become a temptation.

Even thus he lived, with little joy or pain  
Drawn through the channels by which men receive—  
Most men receive the things which for the main  
Make them rejoice or grieve.

But for delight, on spiritual gladness fed,  
And obvious to temptations of like kind;  
One such, from out his very gladness bred,  
It was his lot to find.

When first it came, he lightly put it by,  
But it returned again to him ere long,  
And ever having got some new ally,  
And every time more strong—

A little worm that gnawed the life away  
Of a tall plant, the canker of its root,  
Or like as when from some small speck decay  
Spreads o'er a beauteous fruit.

For still the doubt came back,—Can God provide  
For the large heart of man what shall not pall,  
Nor through eternal ages' endless tide  
On tired spirits fall?

<sup>1</sup> F. W. Robertson, in *Life and Letters*, 222.

Here but one look tow'rd heaven will oft repress  
 The crushing weight of undelightful care;  
 But what were there beyond, if weariness  
 Should ever enter there?

Yet do not sweetest things here soonest cloy?  
 Satiety the life of joy would kill,  
 If sweet with bitter, pleasure with annoy  
 Were not attempered still.

This mood endured, till every act of love,  
 Vigils of praise and prayer, and midnight choir,  
 All shadows of the service done above,  
 And which, while his desire,

And while his hope was heavenward, he had loved,  
 As helps to disengage him from the chain  
 That fastens unto earth—all these now proved  
 Most burdensome and vain.<sup>1</sup>

3. The severity and the variety of man's temptations, together with the persistently lofty and urgent appeals addressed to him, are a supreme tribute to the grandeur of his moral nature. In a race the severity of the handicap is an indication of the capacity of the runner. A great deal is expected from a man who can give another a hundred yards' start. The runners are not all of equal calibre, and they are not handicapped above that they are able. Can we not see here what God is doing? Can we not see how He is dealing with us, according to this Pauline statement? So far from making things too difficult, He is trying to make them easier; He is tempering the strife to each man's strength; He does not want us to lose, but to win; not to fail, but to overcome. That is not harshness, it is kindness; that is not undue severity, it is magnanimity, it is compassion, it is fair-play. Let us not allow ourselves to curse our circumstances, or to arraign God and His plans and His world, as if they were all in special conspiracy against us. The fact is that most of us are in conspiracy against ourselves—perhaps without knowing it. We have groaned about our difficulties, instead of accepting them and using them as stepping-stones to success. We have kicked against our limitations, instead of allowing them to develop our resources. We have resented our hardships and our handicaps,

<sup>1</sup> Trench, *Poems*, 13.

instead of making them contribute to our manhood. We have sat and gloomed at our temptations and roundly cursed our fate, but we have never considered the ways of escape. Thus we have been at once unfair to God and have courted failure for ourselves.

¶ You all know the story about the Black Prince at the battle of Crecy, how his father refused to send help to him when he was hard pressed. It would have been easy for the king to keep the prince out of reach of danger; but no, the father said to those who came appealing for help, "Let the boy win his spurs, and let the day be his."<sup>1</sup>

### III.

#### THE ESCAPE FROM TEMPTATION.

1. God will "with the temptation make also the way of escape." Sometimes we want to see the way of escape before the temptation, but the way of escape comes with the temptation, not before it.

It may have happened to us, in some of our visits to the grandest scenes of nature, to be wending our way along a lake or river where mountains are before us, so close and so encompassing that they appear not only to bar our own progress, but to leave not the smallest outlet for our little boat. But, as we neared these vast barriers which edged us in, we gradually descried an opening between the hills which, as we went on, grew clearer and clearer, and wider and wider, till, safely and smoothly, our little bark floated on by a channel just made for us from within apparently impenetrable masses, to other regions which now range before us in their loveliness. So when the hindrances are the thickest, and the difficulties the most insurmountable, we feel that our faithful God, who made these fastnesses for this very end, will Himself provide the issue, and with the temptation make also the way of escape, that we may be able to endure it.

2. God is said here to make the temptation as well as the way of escape. Nor is this without a purpose. He knows precisely the strength we need, because He has prepared the

<sup>1</sup> F. de W. Lushington, *Sermons to Young Boys*, 24.

occasion on which we shall be called to use it. It will never fail through any miscalculation or ignorance on His part. It will never be too feeble or too long upon the way. We may always be sure His succour will be at hand, a very present help in every time of trouble. Even in those moments in which our temptation comes upon us most suddenly, so that it may seem to have taken even God Himself by surprise, His way of escape will be close beside us. For the swiftest and most unforeseen of temptations are all equally under His control.

¶ I leave you to call this deceiving spirit what you like—or to theorize about it as you like. All that I desire you to recognize is the fact of its being here, and the need of its being fought with. If you take the Bible's account of it, or Dante's, or Milton's, you will receive the image of it as a mighty spiritual creature, commanding others, and resisted by others: if you take Æschylus's or Hesiod's account of it, you will hold it for a partly elementary and unconscious adversity of fate, and partly for a group of monstrous spiritual agencies connected with death, and begotten out of the dust; if you take a modern rationalist's, you will accept it for a mere treachery and want of vitality in our own moral nature exposing it to loathsomeness or moral disease, as the body is capable of mortification or leprosy. I do not care what you call it,—whose history you believe of it,—nor what you yourself can imagine about it; the origin, or nature, or name may be as you will, but the deadly reality of the thing is with us, and warring against us; and on our true war with it depends whatever life we can win. Deadly reality, I say. The puff-adder or horned asp is not more real. Unbelievable,—*those*,—unless you had seen them; no fable could have been coined out of any human brain so dreadful, within its own poor material sphere, as that blue-lipped serpent—working its way sidelong in the sand. As real, but with sting of eternal death—this worm that dies not, and fire that is not quenched, within our souls or around them. Eternal death, I say—sure, that, whatever creed you hold;—if the old Scriptural one, Death of perpetual banishment from before God's face; if the modern rationalist one, Death Eternal for *us*, instant and unredeemable ending of lives wasted in misery.

This is what this unquestionably present—this, according to his power, *omni*-present—fiend, brings us towards, daily. *He* is the person to be “voted” against, my working friend; it is worth something, having a vote against *him*, if you can get it! Which you can, indeed; but not by gift from Cabinet Ministers; you



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must work warily with your own hands, and drop sweat of heart's blood, before you can record that vote effectually.<sup>1</sup>

3. The way of escape must be sought for, or it may not be found. It is not always forcibly obtruded. It reveals itself to the humble and watchful eye—the eye that has become single, and waits only upon God. And if we are tempted, and can see no mode of relief, then we must search for it. Gradually it will open and widen before us.

4. How is it that God makes the way of escape? Notice that it is not *a* way, but *the* way of escape; the one separate escape for each separate temptation.

(1) Sometimes the only victory over a temptation is not to argue with it, not even to wrestle with it, but simply to *get away from it*. "Brethren, let us not be righteous over-much!" St. Paul, indeed, uses no grandiloquent speech as to what a man should do when he finds himself beset by temptations. He does not in this place recommend a man to draw his sword, and plant his right foot forward, and clench his teeth, and do many another strenuous and showy thing which looks so well in a picture and sounds so well when addressed to a great audience; but which is all, as a matter of fact, futile in those hot, and terrible, and lonely hours when we are sorely tempted to do wrong. No; St. Paul tells us here that when we are tempted, the first and only thing to do is to get away from the spot, to run in fact for our life. This is one of those simple and obvious things which never occur to any of us until a genius arises to say them—when you are hard pressed by evil, move on, get away, escape. That may sound tame. It may sound less than the highest; but it is the very highest. Nay, it is the only truth and fact of the matter. There are situations in life, dark turnings in the moral world, sheer precipices where we must not trust ourselves, where the only sensible and religious course is to get away.

¶ In passing through the "Inferno," Dante's spiritual guide would not allow him to stand still for a moment.

¶ "What!" a wayward youth might perhaps answer, incredulously; "no one ever gets wiser by doing wrong? Shall I not know the world best by trying the wrong of it, and repenting?"

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin, *Time and Tide* (*Works*, xvii. 365).



Have I not, even as it is, learned much by many of my errors?" Indeed, the effort by which partially you recovered yourself was precious; that part of your thought by which you discerned the error was precious. What wisdom and strength you kept, and rightly used, are rewarded; and in the pain and the repentance, and in the acquaintance with the aspects of folly and sin, you have learned *something*; how much less than you would have learned in right paths can never be told, but that it is less is certain. Your liberty of choice has simply destroyed for you so much life and strength, never regainable. It is true you now know the habits of swine, and the taste of husks: do you think your father could not have taught you to know better habits and pleasanter tastes, if you had stayed in his house; and that the knowledge you have lost would not have been more, as well as sweeter, than that you have gained?<sup>1</sup>

(2) The way of escape may be very near the entrance gate. It often is. And the victory may be won by *watchfulness over the thoughts*. As is the fountain, so will be the stream. Quench the spark, and you are safe from the conflagration. Crush the serpent's egg, and you need not dread the cockatrice. Conquer evil thoughts, and you will have little danger of evil words and evil ways. The victory over every temptation is easiest, is safest, is most blessed there.

¶ Wasps' nests are destroyed when the wasps are only grubs like caterpillars, and before they have learned to fly. You get a squib, like those they fire off on the fifth of November, and light the end and put it into the hole in the ground where the nest is, and cover it over with a turf. And then all the grubs in the nest are suffocated by the smoke. If you wait till the grubs have wings and have learned to fly, then a ton of dynamite will be of little use; for the wasps will be buzzing all round your ears, and stinging you, and then flying away.<sup>2</sup>

(3) Sometimes *prayer* is the only way of escape. Sometimes the doors are all shut upon human sympathy and understanding, but there is always a way of escape towards God. "I have been driven many times to my knees," said Abraham Lincoln, "by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go."

¶ There is a picture by one of our great artists of a young knight on the verge of a dark wood through which he has to pass. That wood contains all manner of lurking perils and stealthy

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin, *Queen of the Air* (*Works*, xix. 409).

<sup>2</sup> W. V. Robinson.

enemies, and before entering it the young knight has taken off his helmet, and is pouring out his soul in prayer. And the legend at the foot of the picture is this: "Into thy hands, O Lord." We too stand, like that young knight, face to face with all manner of dangers and perils; fierce and deadly temptations of many a kind will assail us as we make our way through the mystic wood. What better can we do than commit ourselves into the keeping of the same gracious and mighty God? "Into thy hands we commit ourselves."<sup>1</sup>

¶ I was in the Puzzle Garden one day at Hampton Court (there they call it *a maze*), and after getting to the centre, I had the greatest difficulty in getting out. But in the centre of that garden there is, not a summer house, but a raised platform. And a man stands on it, and he can see every one in the maze. Soon I heard him calling to me: "Turn to the left, sir," "To the left again," "Now to the right," until I got out. Life is like a puzzle garden sometimes. We do not know which way to turn, whether to go forward, or to turn to this side or to that; but if we look up to God in prayer, He will show us the way, and bring our souls out of trouble. We shall hear a voice behind us saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it."<sup>2</sup>

¶ A young lieutenant who had seen one campaign—alone, and without any of the means and appliances of such war as I had been apprenticed to—I was about to take command, in the midst of a battle, not only of one force whose courage I had never tried, but of another which I had never seen; and to engage a third, of which the numbers were uncertain, with the knowledge that defeat would immeasurably extend the rebellion which I had undertaken to suppress, and embarrass the Government which I had volunteered to serve. Yet, in that great extreme, I doubted only for a moment—one of those long moments to which some angel seems to hold a microscope and show millions of things within it. It came and went between the stirrup and the saddle. It brought with it difficulties, dangers, responsibilities, and possible consequences terrible to face; but it left none behind. I knew that I was fighting for the right. I asked God to help me to do my duty, and I rode on, certain that He would do it.<sup>3</sup>

(4) There is the way of *submission and resistance*. It is all summed up in that word of St. James: "Submit yourselves therefore unto God, but resist the devil." That is the way of submission and resistance, and it is the secret of victory in the

<sup>1</sup> J. D. Jones.

<sup>2</sup> W. V. Robinson.

<sup>3</sup> Edwardes, *A Year on the Punjab Frontier*, ii. 318 (Ruskin's *Works*, xxxi. 495).

hour of fierce temptation. "Submit yourselves to God." Let us yield our nature absolutely and unreservedly to Him. Make an unconditional surrender. Then trust Him to come in the Person of His Spirit, and garrison every part of that yielded being, and undertake the battle for us. Then, when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him. As the flood rushes onwards carrying everything before it, so the tempter comes upon men, if perchance he may find them unprepared and sweep them off their feet. What happens to the man who is submitted to God? The Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against the enemy. An ungrieved Spirit will always mean victory in the hour of temptation. First submit, and then resist. Trust Him to undertake the conflict and then resist.

¶ In an old Continental town they will show you a prison in a tower, and on all the stones of that prison within reach, one word is carved—it is "Resist." Your guide will tell you that years ago a godly woman was for forty years immured in that dungeon, and she spent her time in cutting with a piece of iron on every stone that one word, for the strengthening of her own heart and for the benefit of all who might come after her, "Resist!" "Resist!" "Resist!"<sup>1</sup>

I hoped that with the brave and strong,  
My portioned task might lie;  
To toil amid the busy throng,  
With purpose pure and high;

But God has fixed another part,  
And He has fixed it well;  
I said so with my bleeding heart,  
When first the anguish fell.

Thou, God, hast taken our delight,  
Our treasured hope away;  
Thou bidst us now weep through the night  
And sorrow through the day.

These weary hours will not be lost,  
These days of misery,  
These nights of darkness, anguish-tossed,—  
Can I but turn to Thee:

<sup>1</sup> J. G. Mantle.

With secret labour to sustain  
 In humble patience every blow,  
 To gather fortitude from pain,  
 And hope and holiness from woe.

Thus let me serve Thee from my heart,  
 Whate'er may be my written fate:  
 Whether thus early to depart,  
 Or yet a while to wait.

If Thou shouldst bring me back to life,  
 More humbled I should be,  
 More wise,—more strengthened for the strife,—  
 More apt to lean on Thee:

Should death be standing at the gate,  
 Thus should I keep my vow:  
 But, Lord! whatever be my fate,  
 O let me serve Thee now

<sup>1</sup> Anne Brontë.

MAN'S CHIEF END.

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## MAN'S CHIEF END.

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.—1 Cor. x. 31.

THIS verse, with the passage immediately preceding, illustrates St. Paul's constant habit of solving questions as to conduct by the largest principles. He did not keep his theology and his ethics in separate watertight compartments, having no communication with each other. The greatest truths were used to regulate the smallest duties. Like the star that guided the Magi, they burned high in the heavens, but yet directed to the house in Bethlehem.

The Corinthians were in a practical difficulty. Social life had been upheaved by the action of Christianity. Like the shuddering of the sunny, peaceful plains of Campania from the fierce shock of the insurgent fires of Vesuvius, the whole social fabric, wherever Christ's hand had touched it, was in a state of convulsive trembling; and the convulsion was felt in the agonies of its rebound alike in the deepest and in the most trivial things of life. The ordinary gentleman of the day, in Corinth, was no longer able to associate himself with his everyday acquaintances in the pleasures or the business of social life, without the rebuking face of the new religion gazing at him in serious warning. He could not, as we should say, "dine out" with his friend without being at once confronted by a practical difficulty. The old idol-worship had interpenetrated the social life of Corinth; and when Christians came to accept the invitation of their friends to an ordinary social entertainment, they were placed in a serious dilemma, as they would either appear to sanction by their presence a service of idols and an insult to God, or else would be forced to cut themselves off from the commonest demands of the society of the time. Now, certainly St. Paul in his usual manner touches

specific dangers with specific remedies; but at the same time he never limits himself to such a method. Invariably, whatever be the difficulty he has to deal with, he goes beyond the exact line of the particular question and its corresponding remedy, and sketches out a serviceable and yet a comprehensive canon of conduct. Thus, feeling that what is a desirable principle for *all* converts, when they have seceded from heathenism to the Christian Church, is some guidance for those at Corinth how to comport themselves properly in their social entertainments, instead of going into all the wearisome intricacies of the difficulty—although he *does* touch them also when necessary—he lays down the comprehensive rule of the text.

The principle of this text is—“*Do all to the glory of God.*” Following out (i) this great principle of conduct, we get (ii) a test of action; (iii) a Christian ideal in everyday life; (iv) a transfiguration of drudgery and common toil.

## I.

### THE PRINCIPLE.

“Do all to the glory of God.”

1. St. Paul's words are an expression of a fundamental truth of religion, the truth, namely, that while the living God is the source and efficient cause of all things, so also He is their final end. It follows that God (though He gives lavishly to man gifts of help, and comfort, and blessing) is Himself, and not anything He gives, man's final and only satisfaction; and therefore, that the end He had in view in His creation, and has in view in His government, of the world, is not at all that He Himself may receive from any external being or thing a support which is never needed by that majestic self-sufficing life, but that He may have about Him numberless sons, like Himself in goodness and beauty, and finally fitted to be partakers of His own glory. Now if this truth, as to the final object of life, and therefore the final cause of God's action in Christ Jesus, and government of the world, underlay the Apostle's thought, what must be the result? Surely nothing else but the statement of the text.

¶ "Do all to the glory of God," that is, in a higher manner, in a nobler spirit. Instead of the busy, ever-recurring image of self, which is always like "a forward child" chattering within us, let the thought of God be present with us, like the sea, silent and unfathomable, like the light and air, living and infinite, yet also communicated by Him to us. Let us do all to the glory of God—not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but, as the servants of God, from the heart. When we bring ourselves into that Presence, the temptations of sense flee away; when we lay our doubts and difficulties before Him, in the brightness of that light they are dispersed. It is by communion with Him, who is the essence of Righteousness and Truth and Love, that we are enabled to rise above ourselves. This is what the Scripture calls "living to His glory." The vision of God in His glory (not merely as in a picture, surrounded by angels, but in the higher form of mind or thought) is sometimes seen at a distance from the heights of philosophy, and sometimes has a dwelling-place in the humble soul. If we attempted to describe it, we should fall into unreality, for we see "through a glass" only. Let us think sometimes of the best moments of our lives, when we have been most resigned to the will of God, when we have risen most above the opinions of men, when we have been most free from the temptations of sense, when we have desired to look into the truth, and seen it so far as our earthly state allowed. In this way we may form an idea of what the Apostle meant by living to God's glory, of what Christ meant when He said, The kingdom of God is within you.<sup>1</sup>

2. Now Christianity is not a sum of isolated observances. It is the hallowing of all human interests and occupations alike. Worship is a very small fragment of devotion. The Christian does not offer to God part of his life or of his endowments in order that he may be at liberty to use the rest according to his own caprice. All life, all endowments, are equally owed to our Lord, and equally claimed by Him. Every human office in every part is holy. Our conduct—our whole conduct—is a continuous revelation of what we are. At each moment we are springs of influence. Virtue goes out of us also—or weakness. Our silence speaks. We who profess to be Christians must from day to day either confirm or disparage our Creed. Our faith—our want of faith—must show itself. It is finally the soul that acts. The body is but its instrument.

<sup>1</sup> B. Jowett.

¶ The sense of being God's minister gives to any life that noble pride which is our birthright, and which we ought carefully to cherish. Do we not see on a lower level how fond people are of linking their name and calling with royalty? "Purveyor to His Majesty." We sometimes wonder how these petty hucksters came to possess this sounding title. No doubt the distinction often rests on a slender charter; a mere gossamer thread binds the obscure counter to the throne; yet the privilege is sedulously guarded, and throws a coveted lustre upon the village shop. But how truly grand to relate all life to God, even in its lowliest phases! Nothing is then common or unclean. Everything is on the altar; all is sacramental. Every service is as royal as the golden crowns cast on the jasper pavement. This gives to the ordinary life infinite honour and content.<sup>1</sup>

Teach me, my God and King,  
In all things Thee to see;  
And what I do in any thing,  
To do it as for Thee.

Not rudely, as a beast,  
To runne into an action;  
But still to make Thee prepossest,  
And give it his perfection.

A man that looks on glasse,  
On it may stay his eye;  
Or if he pleaseth, through it passe,  
And then the heav'n espie.

All may of Thee partake;  
Nothing can be so mean,  
Which with his tincture "for Thy sake"  
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause  
Makes drudgery divine:  
Who sweeps the room as for Thy laws  
Makes that and th' action fine.

This is the famous stone  
That turneth all to gold;  
For that which God doth touch and own  
Cannot for lesse be told.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> W. L. Watkinson.

<sup>2</sup> George Herbert.

## II.

## A TEST OF ACTION.

It is surprising how difficult the duties of men sometimes become, when opposite rules are set against one another, or when they have to be reconciled with differences of character. It is surprising how simple they grow when they are considered by the light of great principles; when, dismissing tradition and custom and the opinions of men, we are able simply to ask: "What is the will of God?" If you can say that there is no will of God about this trifling ceremony, about this small dispute (for God does not interfere in such matters, but only in the greater things of righteousness and temperance and truth), the question is already answered: "An highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; the wayfaring man shall not err therein."

¶ People are perpetually squabbling about what will be best to do, or easiest to do, or advisablest to do, or profitablest to do; but they never, so far as I hear them talk, ever ask what it is *just* to do. And it is the law of heaven that you shall not be able to judge what is wise or easy, unless you are first resolved to judge what is just, and to do it. That is the one thing constantly reiterated by our Master—the order of all others that is given oftenest—"Do justice and judgment." That's your Bible order; that's the Service of God,—not praying nor psalm-singing. You are told, indeed, to sing psalms when you are merry, and to pray when you need anything; and, by the perverseness of the evil Spirit in us, we get to think that praying and psalm-singing are "service." If a child finds itself in want of anything, it runs in and asks its father for it—does it call that doing its father a service? If it begs for a toy or a piece of cake—does it call that serving its father? That, with God, is prayer, and He likes to hear it; He likes you to ask Him for cake when you want it; but He doesn't call that "serving Him." Begging is not serving: God likes mere beggars as little as you do—He likes honest servants,—not beggars. So when a child loves its father very much, and is very happy, it may sing little songs about him; but it doesn't call that serving its father; neither is singing songs about God, serving God. It is enjoying ourselves, if it's anything, most probably it is nothing; but if

it's anything it is serving ourselves, not God. And yet we are impudent enough to call our beggings and chauntings "Divine service": we say, "Divine service will be 'performed'" (that's our word—the form of it gone through) "at so-and-so o'clock." Alas! unless we perform Divine service in every willing act of life, we never perform it at all. The one Divine work—the one ordered sacrifice—is to do justice; and it is the last we are ever inclined to do. Anything rather than that! As much charity as you choose, but no justice. "Nay," you will say, "charity is greater than justice." Yes, it is greater; it is the summit of justice—it is the temple of which justice is the foundation. But you can't have the top without the bottom; you cannot build upon charity. You must build upon justice, for this main reason, that you have not, at first, charity to build with. It is the last reward of good work. Do justice to your brother (you can do that whether you love him or not), and you will come to love him. But do injustice to him, because you don't love him; and you will come to hate him.<sup>1</sup>

¶ There is a little organism called *volvox*, which, in its construction, habits of life, and mode of reproduction, stands on the border-line between the animal and vegetable kingdoms. I suppose ever since it has been known, this little creature—so small that it can scarcely be seen with the unaided eye—has been bandied about between the two kingdoms. Why? Because scientists have applied different tests. One has noted its possession of green colouring matter, and has therefore claimed it for the vegetable kingdom, while another, noting its mode of reproduction to be similar to that of some lower forms of animal life, has therefore claimed it for the animal kingdom. Like the *volvox*, many actions have been bandied about. Some claim that they belong to the kingdom of darkness, others that they belong to the Kingdom of God. Ought I to smoke, ought I to go to the theatre, ought I to drink intoxicating liquors, ought I to read my newspaper on Sunday? Ought I to cycle, tram or train on Sunday? Ought I to make my man or maid servant work on Sunday? Ought I to enter the public ballroom, or ought I to dance at all? Ought I to accept bribes in business? Bring the action to this test. Let this bright light shine upon it. Can I do this to the glory of God? In other words, I am a follower of Christ, who summed up His lifework in the sentence, "I have glorified thee on the earth."<sup>2</sup>

¶ Charles Marriott's unfailing good nature—but in fact it

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin, *The Crown of Wild Olive* (*Works*, xviii. 419).

<sup>2</sup> G. Hay Morgan.



was his inveterate Christian consideration—really knew no bounds. Overwhelmed (as he always was) with all manner of work, he never denied himself to any one who saw fit to call on him, or wanted anything of him. “I see you are too busy. I will not disturb you,” once exclaimed Edward King,—(afterwards Bishop of Lincoln, who was at that time an undergraduate of Oriel—“a royal fellow,” as C. M. used to call him)—and was proceeding to leave the room. “That depends” (quietly rejoined Marriott) “on the relative importance of what *I* am doing and what *you* have come to me about.” The reply aptly expresses what the speaker seems always to have felt—namely, that the twelve hours of every day had to be spent in God’s service, and that he was not a competent judge beforehand of *how* God might be most acceptably served. He therefore always held himself in readiness to meet any demand which might by any one be made upon him for a measure of his time, or for a share of his attention.<sup>1</sup>

### III.

#### A CHRISTIAN IDEAL IN EVERYDAY LIFE.

Religion recognizes no bisecting into sacred and secular. “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” It is just as much a part of Christian duty to do one’s weekday work well as it is to pray well. “I must be about my Father’s business,” said Jesus in the dawn of youth; and what do we find Him doing after this recognition of His duty? Not preaching or teaching, but taking up the common duties of common life and putting all His soul into them. He found the Father’s business in His earthly home, in being a dutiful child, subject to His parents, in being a diligent pupil in the village school, and later in being a conscientious carpenter. He did not find religion too spiritual, too transcendental, for weekdays. His devotion to God did not take Him out of His natural human relationships into any realm of mere sentiment: it only made Him all the more loyal to the duties of His place in life. We ought to learn the lesson. Religion is intensely practical. Only so far as it dominates one’s life is it real. We must get the commandments down from the Sinaitic glory amid which they were first graven on stone by the finger of God and give them a

<sup>1</sup> J. W. Burgon, *Lives of Twelve Good Men*, i. 339.

place in the hard, dusty paths of earthly toil and struggle. We must get them off the tables of stone and have them written on the walls of our own hearts. We must bring the Golden Rule down from its bright setting in the teaching of our Lord and get it wrought into our daily, actual life.

¶ The Law of God concerning man is, that if he acts as God's servant he shall be rewarded with such pleasure as no heart can conceive nor tongue tell.<sup>1</sup>

¶ Jenny Lind once said to John Addington Symonds, "I sing to God." Coming as it did from the heart, it was a fine expression. The famous cantatrice was deeply devout, and these words expressed the secret of her soul. She had a vivid sense of God, a boundless joy in Him, and her music was the spontaneous acknowledgment of His presence and beauty. Why should we not do all the work of life in the same spirit?—"I sing for God"; "I plough for God"; "I write for God"; "I build for God"; "I weave for God"; "I buy and sell for God." All that Jenny Lind sang was not strictly sacred, it was often, no doubt, secular and trivial; but she had ever a commanding sense of the heavenly presence, and sang to the God whose gladness filled her heart. So whatever our task may be we may serve Him day and night in His presence.<sup>2</sup>

Dismiss me not Thy service, Lord,  
But train me for Thy will;  
For even I in fields so broad  
Some duties may fulfil;  
And I will ask for no reward,  
Except to serve Thee still.

How many serve, how many more  
May to the service come;  
To tend the vines, the grapes to store,  
Thou dost appoint for some:  
Thou hast Thy young men at the war,  
Thy little ones at home.

All works are good, and each is best  
As most it pleases Thee;  
Each worker pleases when the rest  
He serves in charity:  
And neither man nor work unblest  
Wilt Thou permit to be.

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin, in Cook's *Life of Ruskin*, ii. 329.

<sup>2</sup> W. L. Watkinson.

O ye who serve, remember One  
 The worker's way who trod;  
 He served as man, but now His throne,  
 It is the throne of God;  
 The sceptre He hath to us shown  
 Is like a blossoming rod.

Firm fibres of the tree of life  
 Hath each command of His,  
 And each with clustering blossoms rife  
 At every season is;  
 Bare only, like a sword of strife,  
 Against love's enemies.

Our Master all the work hath done  
 He asks of us to-day;  
 Sharing His service, every one  
 Share too His sonship may.  
 Lord, I would serve and be a son;  
 Dismiss me not, I pray.<sup>1</sup>

## IV.

## A TRANSFIGURATION OF DRUDGERY AND COMMON TOIL.

1. The life of nearly every man has great spaces that are flat and uninteresting. The predominant colour is grey. Incident is rare, monotony is continuous. The same things have been done day by day, and a child's entry in a diary would report the life of many of our days, "Nothing special to-day." But, really, life is not monotonous. It is we who are monotonous. Life is full of a hidden beauty, a hidden glory—indeed, of a hidden God. We may look through its tiniest part, if it is well done and done in sincerity, and see the vision of the golden heavens, and catch suggestions of the face of Jesus. Even the most limited sphere will give us room for the discipline of our character into the beauty of heaven. And the least conspicuous life may perform ministries which are near relatives to the service of the very angels. It is the dropping of God out of life that makes life uninteresting; it is the neglect of His presence that shadows our days. Let Him be there, let His face shine upon us, and

<sup>1</sup> T. T. Lynch, *The Rivulet*.

the most trivial act is invested with an awful glory, and every bit of life is enhanced and transfigured with its power. The way to find blessedness is to find God; and He is to be found in every ordinary thing in our daily round. We always find Him when we try to do everything for His glory. "For Thy sake!" This is life's deepest inspiration, and this its highest power. This touches us when all other motives are weak. This changes drudgery into Divinity. But to be fruitful it must be always held before the mind, and always kept in the heart. Day by day our lowliest duty must be lifted to this great height; so will the great God stoop to our lowliness, and our dustiest and most commonplace way be radiant with His infinite glory.

¶ It may be argued again that dissatisfaction with our life's endeavour springs in some degree from dulness. We require higher tasks because we do not recognise the height of those we have. Trying to be kind and honest seems an affair too simple and too inconsequential for gentlemen of our heroic mould; we had rather set ourselves something bold, arduous, and conclusive; we had rather found a schism or suppress a heresy, cut off a hand or mortify an appetite. But the task before us, which is to co-endure with our existence, is rather one of microscopic fineness, and the heroism required is that of patience. There is no cutting of the Gordian knots of life; each must be smilingly unravelled.<sup>1</sup>

¶ Brownlow North has told us that it was about eleven months after his awakening at Dallas, when he strongly felt it to be his duty to do some service for the Lord. For two months before this he had shut himself up in his own room, reading the Bible and praying. He then said to himself that he must do something for God, but felt that he could not. The thought suggested itself to his mind that he might at least distribute tracts, but he felt that to do so would make himself ridiculous, and that people would laugh at him and call him mad. At last he resolved to try, and putting a number of tracts into his pocket, he went into the most secluded part of Elgin, in which he was living. The first person he met with was an old woman, who amazed him by accepting his tract without laughing at him. To another old woman whom he saw coming down the road he presented another tract, and she received it with thanks. The third he gave to a policeman, who said, "Thank you, Mr. North." He recorded it as his experience after fourteen years' trial, that only on one occasion was a tract refused, and that was by a professed infidel,

<sup>1</sup> R. L. Stevenson, *A Christmas Sermon*.

and yet he had systematically given away tracts to persons of all ranks, in all sorts of places. Very few Christians can be preachers like Brownlow North, but there are none who cannot be tract distributors.<sup>1</sup>

¶ This is what Brother Lawrence once told me, writes his friend and biographer: "For me, the time of action does not differ from the time of prayer, and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are together calling for as many different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as when upon my knees at the Blessed Sacrament.

"Nor is it needful," says Brother Lawrence himself in his *Conversations*, "that we should have great things to do." I am giving you the picture of a lay-brother serving in a kitchen; let me then use his own words: "We can do *little* things for God; I turn the cake that is frying on the pan for love of Him, and that done, if there is nothing else to call me, I prostrate myself in worship before Him, who has given me grace to work; afterwards I rise happier than a king. It is enough for me to pick up but a straw from the ground for the love of God.

"We search for stated ways and methods of learning how to love God, and, to come at that love, we disquiet our minds by I know not how many devices; we give ourselves a world of trouble and pursue a multitude of practices to attain to a sense of the Presence of God. And yet it is so simple. How very much shorter it is, and easier to do our *common business* purely for the love of God, to set His consecrating mark on all we lay our hands to, and thereby to foster the sense of His abiding Presence by communion of our heart with His! There is no need either of art or science; just as we are, we can go to Him, simply and with single heart."

Only a little shrivelled seed,  
It might be flower, or grass, or weed;  
Only a box of earth on the edge  
Of a narrow, dusty, window-ledge;  
Only a few scant summer showers;  
Only a few clear shining hours;  
That was all. Yet God could make  
Out of these, for a sick child's sake,  
A blossom-wonder, as fair and sweet  
As ever broke at an angel's feet.

Only a life of barren pain,  
Wet with sorrowful tears for rain,

<sup>1</sup> K. Moody-Stuart, *Brownlow North*, 50.

Warmed sometimes by a wandering gleam  
 Of joy, that seemed but a happy dream;  
 A life as common and brown and bare  
 As the box of earth in the window there;  
 Yet it bore, at last, the precious bloom  
 Of a perfect soul in that narrow room;  
 Pure as the snowy leaves that fold  
 Over the flower's heart of gold.<sup>1</sup>

2. All that God wants of any one is *faithfulness*. Not brilliance, not success, not notoriety which attracts newspaper notice, but the quiet, regular, and careful performance of trivial and common duties, as beneath "the great Taskmaster's eye." To be faithful in that which is least will win as rich a reward as faithfulness in the greatest. Indeed, it is harder to be faithful over a very little than over much. The opportunity, therefore, of winning the highest reward in the future world is given not only to those who are called to occupy the high places of the field, where every brilliant act is chronicled by admiring pens, but to those who dig out the foundations, who do duty in the trenches, and who are buried in common graves, without magnificent obsequies or glowing epitaphs. Of many it will be said at last: "They had their reward" in the blowing of the trumpet of earthly fame and the murmured applause of many voices; the turn of those to whom no one said "Thank you" will then have arrived.

¶ Have you not seen the way in which men construct arches? A number of beams, wooden uprights, and cross-pieces are constructed into the form of the arch which is to be. The structure looks very confused and flimsy, it is difficult to trace the design, and one spark of flame would consume the whole; but upon its span the bricks and stones are deposited which will last for generations. So upon the mean structure of daily drudgery, which excites no enthusiasm, which strains the muscles and wearies the nerves, is being built up a character which will be "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever" when the heavens have passed away "as a scroll."<sup>2</sup>

We cannot kindle when we will  
 The fire which in the heart resides;  
 The spirit bloweth and is still  
 In mystery our soul abides.  
 But tasks in hours of insight will'd  
 Can be through hours of gloom fulfill'd.

<sup>1</sup> Henry van Dyke.

<sup>2</sup> F. B. Meyer.



With aching hands and bleeding feet  
 We dig and heap, lay stone on stone;  
 We bear the burden and the heat  
 Of the long day, and wish 'twere done.  
 Not till the hours of light return,  
 All we have built do we discern.<sup>1</sup>

¶ Do not ask for great opportunities of service, or be disappointed if you feel no glow of devotion to other people or even to God. We are all too anxious to be conscious of beautiful feelings; they comfort us and lead us to think that we are in the right way; but the real test is obedience—doing the right things as far as we know them. Feelings are very misleading: let them come when they come; do not be disheartened if they do not come, or if when they come they soon vanish. This I think is the path to higher perfection; at any rate no other path is certain. Hold fast to the assurance that God wants you to have the mind of Christ; pray for it; but meanwhile, whether your heart goes with it or not, try in humble, unostentatious ways to serve Christ by serving others.<sup>2</sup>

¶ Only one letter received by this momentous mail brought the least encouragement to Coillard—it was one addressed by the Rev. W. G. Lawes, of the L.M.S., New Guinea, to Mme. Coillard, who had gone out with him and his wife in the *John Williams* (1860).

“PORT MORESBY, *September 18, 1877.*

“I remember you perfectly as you were then, and have sometimes been helped and strengthened by the remembrance of your strong faith. . . . Our work on Savage Island was very delightful. ‘All work for Christ is that,’ you will say, and so indeed it is, but it had in it that which human nature rejoices in—a large measure of success and prosperity. It was my happiness to baptize upwards of one thousand converts, to train a band of young men who are now at work as pastors on their own island, and as pioneers on this and other heathen [islands], and, above all, to translate into their language the whole of the New Testament and part of the Old. . . . *I felt sorry to leave the work on Savage Island, but the call to harder work, more self-denying work, is an honour from the Master’s hands. Does He not in this way deal with His servants? Is not the reward of service in His Kingdom more service, harder service, and (measured by human standards) less successful service?* We deal just so with our children,

<sup>1</sup> Matthew Arnold.

<sup>2</sup> *The Life of R. W. Dale of Birmingham*, 664.

and we ought not to repine when our Father calls us from some loved, congenial work to something more arduous and difficult."

These words at such a time came to them—to M. Coillard especially—as a message straight from God. It was not the only time that a letter, apparently quite accidental, opportunely shed light upon his path, and showed him, as he himself would say, how real is the Communion of Saints, and what a myth is the supposed rivalry of sects and societies, when each other's experiences, successes, and even apparent failures teach such lessons of faith and obedience in God's service.<sup>1</sup>

Love and pity are pleading with me this hour.

What is this voice that stays me forbidding to yield,  
Offering beauty, love, and immortal power,  
Æons away in some far-off heavenly field?

Though I obey thee, Immortal, my heart is sore.

Though love be withdrawn for love it bitterly grieves:  
Pity withheld in the breast makes sorrow more.

Oh, that the heart could feel what the mind believes!

Cease, O love, thy fiery and gentle pleading.

Soft is thy grief, but in tempest through me it rolls.

Dreamst thou not whither the path is leading

Where the Dark Immortal would shepherd our weeping  
souls? <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C. W. Mackintosh, *Coillard of the Zambesi*, 288.

<sup>2</sup> A. E., *The Divine Vision*, 78.

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## PROCLAIMING THE LORD'S DEATH.

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come.—1 Cor. xi. 26.

1. THE Apostle Paul sustained to the Corinthian Church the relation of a father to his child. By him the Gospel had been first preached in the rich and sensual city; by his instrumentality the first converts had been won to Christ; and with all a father's yearning did he watch over their welfare, counsel them in their ever-recurring perplexities, and guide the heedless footsteps which were too prone to go astray. To his fatherly care for their interests we owe the circumstantial account which he has given us in this chapter of the institution of the Lord's Supper, in the celebration of which, among the Corinthians, certain abuses had crept in. His account of it, here recorded, is a valuable and welcome revelation. He was not present in the Upper Room. He was not among the awe-stricken company who were thrilled with horror by the announcement that amongst them was a foul betrayer, and who, scarce recovered from the shock of such sad tidings, were invited to join in the tender and prophetic feast; and yet he had not been left to the hazard of a traditional knowledge, nor had he received his impression of the scene from the glowing descriptions of another. He distinctly repudiates the thought that he had either received it or been taught it of man, and expressly states that "he had received it directly of the Lord." So distinguishing was the honour put upon the Apostle of the Gentiles, and so important the institution itself, that there was given to him a new revelation—that its Divine paternity might be placed beyond all cavil, and that it might be authenticated by yet weightier evidence, and more firmly homed in the hearts of believers, in the perpetuity of its obligation to the end of time.

2. The words of the text are, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come." The eating and drinking are a proclamation. It is surprising that, notwithstanding these words, this aspect of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper receives so little emphasis. We give the Sacrament names. We call it "the Eucharist," drawing attention to the element of thanksgiving; or "the Communion," in order to recognize in it that fellowship which it offers with Christ Himself and with one another; or simply "the Lord's Supper." But here, after repeating the words of the institution, St. Paul does not speak of the giving of thanks or the fellowship as the great purpose of the institution, but says that that purpose is fulfilled when we proclaim the Lord's death till He come.

¶ "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do *shew*." I cannot tell why our translators preferred this verb to "proclaim" or "announce," which would have seemed the more obvious one. But should we have expected either word? Are we not speaking of a Communion, of a participation in something? Can an ordinance which possesses that character be described as showing, announcing, declaring? It is safer to let the Apostle explain himself than to insist that he shall follow a course which we have prescribed for him. I believe he will tell us hereafter more about communion and participation than we should ever find out for ourselves; but I doubt whether we shall profit by his teaching, if we stumble at this phrase and wish to get rid of it. Do you think that any ordinance of Christ can have reference merely to the advantage or enjoyment of those who submit to it? Did He come from heaven to enjoy or to suffer; to be ministered unto or to minister? If the eating of the bread and the drinking of the wine imports any communion with Him, any sympathy with Him, can this point of communion and sympathy be wanting? Did He not come to show forth or declare a truth to men into which only some would enter? If we are not willing in all our acts and services to make this a primary object; if we are thinking of some selfish end as above this; can we be like Him? Let us grasp this thought steadfastly. If this feast does not show forth or declare something to the world; if we seek in it only for some benefit to ourselves; it cannot be a communion in the body or in the mind of Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Let us see, then, what this proclamation consists of, and (in

<sup>1</sup> F. D. Maurice, *Lincoln's Inn Sermons*, iv. 99.



conclusion) how it may be made. It will be found on consideration to consist of three things :—

- I. A Remembrance of the Past.
- II. A Recognition of the Present.
- III. A Regard to the Future.

## I.

### A REMEMBRANCE OF THE PAST.

“Ye proclaim the Lord’s death.”

1. St. Paul’s words give prominence to the truth that the Sacrament was intended primarily as a memorial or remembrance of the Saviour. Nothing could be simpler or more human than our Lord’s appointment of this Sacrament. Lifting the material of the Supper before Him, He bids His disciples make the simple act of eating and drinking the occasion of remembering Him. As the friend who is setting out on a long absence or is passing for ever from earth puts into our hands his portrait or something he has used or worn or prized, and is pleased to think that we shall treasure it for his sake, so did Christ on the eve of His death secure this one thing, that His disciples should have a memento by which to remember Him. And as the dying gift of a friend becomes sacred to us as his own person, and we cannot bear to see it handed about by unsympathetic hands and remarked upon by those who have not the same loving reverence as ourselves, and as when we gaze at his portrait, or when we use the very pen or pencil worn smooth by his fingers, we recall the many happy times we spent together and the bright and inspiring words that fell from his lips, so does this Sacrament seem sacred to us as Christ’s own Person, and by means of it grateful memories of all He was and did throng into the mind.

¶ It is no uncommon thing in the history of nations to commemorate events of national importance by expressive symbolism. Medals are struck to celebrate a victory or to perpetuate the prowess of a hero. The statues of the wise and of the valiant are niched in their country’s temples—columns rear their tall heads on the mounds of world-famed battlefields, or on some holy place of liberty—processions and pageants of high and solemn festivity transmit from generation to generation the

memory of notable days and deeds. And it is right that it should be so. These things are expressions of something great and true, and by how much they are invested with imposing grandeur, by so much is the likelihood that they will be fastened upon the memory and the heart. There is hope of a nation when its gratitude lives, though the exhibitions of that gratitude may be extravagant and unseemly.

If we come from the national to the individual, how memory clings round some relic of sanctity bestowed on us by some far-off friend, some dear gage of affection; the gift, perhaps in the latest hour, of the precious and sainted dead. As we gaze upon them—mute but eloquent reminders of a past that has fled for ever—how closely they seem linked with our every conception of the giver, and in what an uncounted value we hold them for the giver's sake.<sup>1</sup>

¶ In the Highlands of Scotland, in a wild region, there is a spring at which Prince Albert once stopped to quench his thirst. The owner of the spring fenced it in and built a tasteful monument, making the waters flow into a basin of hewn stone, on which he placed an inscription. Every passing stranger stopping to drink at this fountain reads the inscription and recalls the memory of the noble prince whom it honours. Thus the spring is both a memorial and a blessing; it keeps in mind the great man, and it gives drink to the weary and the thirsty. The Lord's Supper is a memorial to Christ, but it is food and drink to every one who rightly receives it.<sup>2</sup>

¶ Jesus Christ could not bear the thought of being forgotten by His people. God and man long to be remembered. This is one point of fellow-feeling at which the Divine heart touches the human. One of the greatest calamities in the sight of God which can befall the wicked is that "his memory shall be cut off." I know of nothing within the covers of this Book more touching than the way in which the prophets represent God and His people—the One truthfully, and the other untruthfully—as bringing the charge of forgetfulness against each other. "Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me" (Isa. xlix. 14). In these words we find the awful charge of unfaithfulness and forgetfulness brought against God Himself by the people of His choice. This suspicion must vanish, or the relationship must cease. On the other hand, there comes from the fatherly and infinitely tender heart of God a broken sigh which has the undertone of desolation in it, "My people have forgotten me days without number" (Jer. ii. 32); and the answer

<sup>1</sup> W. M. Punshon.

<sup>2</sup> S. Marriott, *On Playing the Game*, 190.

which He gives to their accusation is, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Thus, in God's relationship with His people, all is made to hinge upon this one word "forget." "Blot me not out of the book of thy remembrance," exclaims man to God; "Blot me not out of the book of thy remembrance" is the mysterious and pathetic appeal of God to man! Now this longing to be remembered, so Divine and so human, is found with cumulative force and intensity in "the man Christ Jesus," and is inseparably associated with the institution of the Lord's Supper. He instituted it so as to make it supremely difficult for His followers to forget Him.<sup>1</sup>

2. What is it that we are to remember? It is "the Lord's death"—His death, not His life, though that was lustrous with a holiness without the shadow of a stain; His death, not His teaching, though that embodied the fulness of a wisdom that was Divine; His death, not His miracles, though His course was a march of mercy, and in His track of blessing the world rejoiced and was glad. His death! His body, not glorious but broken; His blood, not coursing through the veins of a conqueror, but shed, poured out for man. On the summit of the Mount of Transfiguration, when the hidden Divinity broke for a while through its disguise of flesh, and Moses and Elias, those federal elders of the former time, came down in conference, and the awe-stricken disciples feared the baptism of the cloud, they "spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." His death! Still His death! Grandest and most consecrating memory for both earth and Heaven.

See Him set forth before your eyes,  
That precious bleeding Sacrifice!  
His offer'd benefits embrace,  
And freely now be saved by grace.

¶ "Ye do proclaim the Lord's *death*."—That is the central message. The mortal is the vital here. It is not, He was born, was made Man, lived, wrought, taught, blessed the poor sinful world by the touch of His feet, and the look of His fair countenance, and the words such as man never spoke before. It is that He died. It is that Gethsemane and Golgotha were that for which, above all things, He came. "He gave his life

<sup>1</sup> D. Davies.

a ransom for many." "He poured out his soul unto death." He was "lifted up from the earth." He "endured the cross." "That he might sanctify his people with his own blood, he suffered, without the gate." "Without shedding of blood was no remission"; "He loosed us from our sins in his own blood." He came "again from the dead, in the blood of the everlasting covenant." "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!"<sup>1</sup>

3. "To proclaim the Lord's death" is not merely to announce our belief that Jesus Christ died upon the Cross some eighteen hundred years ago. That, an infidel might do; or, at least, a man who denies the inspiration and authority of Holy Scripture, and puts the sacred narrative on a level with other books, might do. That, certainly, a sinful man might do; or a mere worldling, a man totally careless about living a life of faith in the Son of God. All these persons might accept and credit the fact of the Saviour's dying, and might be willing to proclaim their acceptance; and some of them would probably avow their persuasion that the Being who hung upon the Cross was no ordinary person, but the Prince of glory, the Lord of life, the incarnate Son of God Himself. And yet such confession as this would not be *Christian* confession. It would not be what the Apostle here means by showing the Lord's death. No! The Apostle means by this expression the proclaiming of that death as an event, as a fact, upon which all our hopes of access to God and all our hopes of life, of salvation, and of blessedness depend; and the proclaiming of it, too, as a thing that was done for ourselves. Then do we fully show the Lord's death, when by word, and by significant action, and by the whole course and tenor of our life, we announce our confident persuasion, that that dying upon the Cross was a dying for us.

4. We are not to understand the Apostle as limiting the remembrance rigidly to the actual Passion. The form of the memorial is fitted to recall the life of our Lord as well as His death. It is His body and blood we are invited by the symbols to remember. By them we are brought into the presence of an actual living Person. Our religion is not a theory; it is not a speculation, a system of philosophy putting us in possession of a true scheme of the universe and guiding us

<sup>1</sup> H. O. G. Moule, *Thoughts for the Sundays of the Year*, 172.

to a sound code of morals; it is, above all, a personal matter. We are saved by being brought into right personal relations. And in this Sacrament we are reminded of this and are helped to recognize Christ as an actual living Person, who by His body and blood, by His actual humanity, saved us. The body and blood of Christ remind us that His humanity was as substantial as our own, and His life as real. He redeemed us by the actual human life He led and by the death He died, by His use of the body and soul we make other uses of. And we are saved by remembering Him and by assimilating the spirit of His life and death.

¶ St. Paul says, "*the Lord's death.*" If he had not said so, if this expression, "the Lord," did not stand written in his Epistle, there are many who would have called it hard and cold. "The Saviour," they would have said; "the Divine Bridegroom, the ineffable Sacrifice that is offered to us in this feast. How can you speak of 'the Lord' like some writer of the Old Testament?" I fancy that the Hebrew of the Hebrews used that Hebrew phrase because he deemed it not to be obsolete for any, because he knew that it was not obsolete for him. He wanted sympathy and fellowship. He wanted also to be guided and governed. The Incarnation had not lessened but deepened his reverence for the unseen Guide of his heart and reins. His belief in a brother of Man did not make him remember less or rejoice less that He is the Lord of men. There were times when he delighted to call Him *our* Lord. There were occasions when *the* Lord expressed more fully the universality of His dominion. This was one of them. He is speaking of the bread and wine as testifying, not to him or to his brethren, but to all men, of One whose Kingdom was in the midst of them, of One who had proved Himself to be the King and Shepherd, by dying for them.<sup>1</sup>

5. When Christ said, "Do this in remembrance of me," He meant that His people to all time should remember that He had given Himself wholly to them and for them. The symbols of His body and blood were intended to keep us in mind that all that gave Him a place among men He devoted to us. By giving His flesh and blood He means that He gives us His all, Himself wholly; and by inviting us to partake of His flesh and blood He means that we must receive Him into the most real connection

<sup>1</sup> F. D. Maurice.



possible, must admit His self-sacrificing love into our heart as our most cherished possession. He bade His disciples remember Him, knowing that the death He was about to die would "draw all men unto Him," would fill the despairing with hopes of purity and happiness, would cause countless sinners to say to themselves with soul-subduing rapture, "He loved me, and gave himself for me." He knew that the love shown in His death and the hopes it creates would be prized as the world's redemption, and that to all time men would be found turning to Him and saying, "If I forget thee, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." And therefore He presents Himself to us as He died: as One whose love for us actually brought Him to the deepest abasement and sorest suffering, and whose death opens for us a way to the Father.

¶ For the first time the Dorcas Street Sabbath School Teachers' gift from South Melbourne Presbyterian Church was put to use—a new Communion Service of silver. They gave it in faith that we should require it, and in such we received it. And now the day had come and gone! For three years we had toiled and prayed and taught for this. At the moment when I put the bread and wine into those dark hands, once stained with the blood of cannibalism, now stretched out to receive and partake the emblems and seals of the Redeemer's love, I had a foretaste of the joy of Glory that well-nigh broke my heart to pieces. I shall never taste a deeper bliss, till I gaze on the glorified face of Jesus Himself.<sup>1</sup>

¶ In 1861 a brave volunteer turned his back upon loved ones in his little home, nestling among the hills of the Blue Ridge and the spurs of the Alleghanies, in Craig County, Va., and went to the battlefield to fight for what he believed to be right. On the 3rd of July 1863, in that fatal charge made by Pickett, he was shot down, and there gave his life for his country. On the following day (4th July) a son was born. As this son grew in stature and in knowledge, his mother would point to a photograph, and tell him that that was his father. He grew to be a man, and at last had the privilege of walking over the ground that had been made sacred with the blood of a father. He cannot express to you his feelings as he stood upon that holy ground; the acute conception of fancy with the vivid flights of

<sup>1</sup> *John G. Paton*, ii, 222.



imagination would be inadequate to the task. When he returned to his home, and looked again upon the picture as it hung upon the wall, he remembered that his mother had told him that it was his father. He has never seen him; but some time he hopes to see him face to face, and then he will no longer need the picture, for he shall see him as he is.<sup>1</sup>

## II.

## A RECOGNITION OF THE PRESENT.

“As often as.”

1. It is manifest from the solemnity of its inauguration, and from the singular reverence with which it was regarded by the early Christians, that the Lord's Supper was not intended to be a thing of one generation, but to be a precious and hallowed memorial to the end of time. So broad and deep was the impression of its perpetual obligation that in every age of the Church, alike when it was crushed by persecution, and when it had degenerated into worldly alliance and conformity, the continuity of this great festival sustained no interruption; it remained in general acknowledgment through all external changes. This perpetuity of the Sacrament seems to stamp it as a confirming ordinance—confirming man's faith in God, confirming God's fidelity to man.

2. These symbols were appointed to be for a remembrance of Christ in order that, remembering Him, we might renew our fellowship with Him. In the Holy Sacrament there is not a mere representation of Christ or a bare commemoration of events in which we are interested; there is also an actual, present communion between Christ and the soul.

We may not climb the heavenly steeps  
To bring the Lord Christ down:  
In vain we search the lowest deeps,  
For Him no depths can drown.

Nor holy bread, nor blood of grape,  
The lineaments restore  
Of Him we know in outward shape  
And in the flesh no more.

<sup>1</sup> W. H. Book.

He cometh not a king to reign;  
 The world's long hope is dim;  
 The weary centuries watch in vain  
 The clouds of heaven for Him.

Death comes, life goes; the asking eye  
 And ear are answerless;  
 The grave is dumb, the hollow sky  
 Is sad with silentness.

The letter fails, and systems fall,  
 And every symbol wanes;  
 The Spirit over-brooding all  
 Eternal Love remains.

And not for signs in heaven above  
 Or earth below they look,  
 Who know with John His smile of love,  
 With Peter His rebuke.

In joy of inward peace, or sense  
 Of sorrow over sin,  
 He is His own best evidence,  
 His witness is within.

No fable old, nor mythic lore,  
 Nor dream of bards and seers,  
 No dead fact stranded on the shore  
 Of the oblivious years;—

But warm, sweet, tender, even yet  
 A present help is He;  
 And faith has still its Olivet,  
 And love its Galilee.<sup>1</sup>

3. There are three distinct things that stare us in the face here: first, the advent of our Lord in the days of His humiliation; secondly, the coming advent of our Lord in His glory; and between the two, a distinctive sacramental rite—"As often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup" (that is, in this present), "ye proclaim the Lord's death" (that is, in that past) "till he come" (that is, in the anticipation of that future). Now, we may be certain of this, that this is not a mere artificial arrangement; there must

<sup>1</sup> Whittier.

be something in the Sacrament which makes it fit to stand between the advent consummated in Christ's redemptive death and the advent of His coming glory. What is that connecting thing? The one thing that marks out the Sacrament as being what it is amidst Christian rites, is that, in a special sense, it is the sphere of our Lord's presence. Our Lord's presence and His humanity are revealed to us under three distinct conditions. First, He has been present in the days of His historical life under conditions of bodily humiliation. Secondly, He will be present after His second coming under conditions of glorification. But between these two conditions He is present with His people in a spiritual manner.

¶ How deep is our obligation to our own Liturgy for bringing out so distinctly, through the means of Holy Communion, the reality of Christ's spiritual presence, and the verity of our communion with Him in this Holy Sacrament. It has preserved for us the true doctrine in this particular as perfectly as it has done justice to the truth first considered, namely, the memorial of the death of Christ. For instance, "He hath given His Son our Saviour Jesus Christ not only to die for us, but *also to be our spiritual food and sustenance* in that Holy Sacrament";—"For as the benefit is great, if with a true penitent heart and lively faith we receive that Holy Sacrament (for then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink His blood; then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us), so is the danger great, if we receive the same unworthily. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink His blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us"—"Almighty and everliving God, we most heartily thank Thee, for that Thou dost vouchsafe to feed us, who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of Thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ; and dost assure us thereby of Thy favour and goodness towards us; and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of Thy Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people."<sup>1</sup>

4. The past, however sweet and precious, is not enough for any soul to live upon. And so this memorial rite, just because

<sup>1</sup> Canon Furse.

it is memorial, is a symbol for the present. That is taught us in that great chapter—the sixth of St. John's Gospel—which was spoken long before the institution of the Lord's Supper, but expresses in words the same ideas as it expresses by material forms. The Christ who died is the Christ who lives, and must be lived upon by the Christian. If our relation to Jesus Christ were only that "Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself"; and if we had to look back through lengthening vistas of distance and thickening folds of oblivion, simply to a historical past, in which He was once offered, the retrospect would not have the sweetness in it which it now has. But when we come to this thought, that the Christ who was for us is also the Christ in us, and that He is not the Christ for us unless He is the Christ in us; and His death will never wash away our sins unless we feed upon Him, here and now, by faith and meditation, then the retrospect becomes blessedness. The Christian life is not merely the remembrance of a historical Christ in the past, it is also the present participation in a living Christ with us now.

He is near each of us that we may make Him the very food of our spirits. We are to live upon Him. He is to be incorporated within us by our own act. This is no mysticism, it is a piece of simple reality. There is no Christian life without it. The true life of the believer is just the feeding of our souls upon Him—our minds accepting, meditating upon, digesting the truths which are incarnated in Jesus; our hearts feeding upon the love which is so tender, warm, stooping, and close; our wills feeding upon and nourished by the utterance of His will in commandments which to know is joy and to keep is liberty; our hopes feeding upon Him who is our Hope, and in whom they find no chaff and husks of peradventures, but the pure wheat of "Verily! verily I say unto you"; the whole nature thus finding its nourishment in Jesus Christ.

¶ "We proclaim the Lord's death." By the very fact of so doing we proclaim also His glorious present life, His victory over the grave, His spiritual presence with His people, His gift of Himself to be their life indeed. Never, let us be quite sure of this, would the first believers have kept festival over their Master's death, had not that death been followed by a triumph over the grave which at once and for ever showed His dying

work to be the supreme achievement which it was. Only the risen Christ can explain the joy of the Lord's Supper. Without Him it would have been a funeral meal, kept for a while by love in its despair, and then dropped for ever. From the very first till now it has been a feast of life and of thanksgiving. It is a contemporary and immortal witness to the risen One. And the risen One is alive for ever more. And in His eternal life He is our life, here and now. Feed on Him as such, feed everywhere and always upon Him. Eat Him and drink Him, that you may live because of Him. Such is the message of the festal Meal of the Church, spoken straight from her Lord to the heart of every member of His Body.<sup>1</sup>

¶ What would be the value of the Holy Supper if it were simply a memorial of a Divine visitation long ago, and not a pledge and a discovery of the Lord's abiding presence? John Knox called it "a singular medicine for all poor sick creatures, a comfortable help to weak souls"; and he "utterly condemned the vanity of those that affirmed sacraments to be nothing else but bare and naked signs." I fear there are few among us in these days who thus esteem them. The truth is that the Sacraments are the very heart of Christian worship, and their neglect, their perfunctory and slovenly administration, is a sore impoverishment of the Church, and proves how very low the tide of our spiritual life has ebbed. True worship is essentially sacramental, and I warmly sympathize with old Gilbert of Sempringham, the friend of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, when he says: "All doctrine is suspect with me, and surely despised, which introduces no mention of Christ, which neither renews me with His Sacraments, nor informs me with His precepts, nor inflames me with His promises."<sup>2</sup>

¶ A communion was held at Pesth, in Hungary, on the 1st of January 1843, being the Lord's Day. We met in an upper room, at night and in secret—"for fear of the Jews," and to escape the eye of an intolerant Government. From the moment that the service began, the place where we were assembled seemed to be filled with a mysterious presence. Indeed, the risen Lord had entered by the closed door, and stood, as at Jerusalem, in the midst of His disciples. Deep silence fell on the little company as they realized His nearness, a silence interrupted only at intervals by the deep-drawn sigh of some bursting heart. The dividing wall which separated heaven and earth seemed for the time removed, and that fellowship between both was ex-

<sup>1</sup> H. C. G. Moule, *Thoughts for the Sundays of the Year*, 173.

<sup>2</sup> D. Smith, *Christian Counsel*, 39.



perienced which is the fullest blessedness of earth, and anticipates the glory of heaven.<sup>1</sup>

### III.

#### A REGARD TO THE FUTURE.

“Till he come.”

1. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper not *only* proclaims to us the Gospel of the Passion, it also proclaims to us that great Gospel which is the centre and basis of all Christian hope: the Gospel of the second coming of Jesus Christ our Lord. And since this holy rite is in creed and in action, they who preach it look back upon the first Advent and recognize and confess its redemptive aspect, and they look forward to the second Advent and recognize it and confess it as being the one great act in which that redemptive work on Calvary will reach to its full and to its glorious climax. And in this present, the gaze of our faith is fixed upon the redemption consecrated in Christ's first coming; the eyes of our hope are fixed on the glorious consummation of His work in His second coming, and in the meantime we wait with the repose of love, giving ourselves up to His sweet ministries, in the conviction that as often as we eat this bread, and drink the cup, we “proclaim the Lord's death till he come.”

In the original words of the institution our Lord Himself makes reference to the future; till I “drink it new in the kingdom of God.” And in the text here, the Apostle provides for the perpetual continuance, and emphasizes the prophetic aspect, of the rite, by that word, “till he come.” His death necessarily implies His coming again. The Cross and the Throne are linked together by an indissoluble bond. Being what it is, the death cannot be the end. Being what He is, if He has once been offered to bear the sins of many, so He must come the second time without sin unto salvation. The rite, just because it is a rite, is the prophecy of a time when the need for it, arising from weak flesh and an intrusive world, shall cease. “They shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord; at that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the

<sup>1</sup> *Memoir of John Duncan*, 334.



Lord." There shall be no temple in that great city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple thereof. So all external worship is a prophecy of the coming of the perfect time when, that which is perfect being come, the external helps and ladders to climb to the loftiest shall be done away.

¶ Of all earthly signs and tokens, there is none which seems so wonderfully ordained to prepare us for the last Day, and keep us in mind of it, as the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the holy Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. Holy Scripture expressly connects the one with the other; the Communion with the Day of Judgment. For after St. Paul had put the Corinthians in mind of what he had always taught them concerning that Sacrament, how that our Lord ordained it, the same night in which He was betrayed, to be *done*, or sacrificed, in remembrance of Him after He was gone, lest they should imagine that it was only the Apostles who had to perform this service, seeing that they alone were present with our Lord when He commanded it, the Apostle goes on and declares, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come"—as much as to say that this mode of remembering our Lord's Death, and setting it forth before God and man, should never cease, while the world should stand. One generation after another will perish from the face of the earth; cities and empires will fade away; the wisdom of the wise, and the understanding of the prudent will be forgotten; customs, manners, languages may change, and the outward face of things be ever so different: but still this holy memorial of God made Man and crucified for us will go on being offered, and the holy Feast will go on to be received, from time to time, in all Churches of all lands, until that last morning break upon the earth, and the very meaning and substance of that Sacrament, the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, shall appear openly in the eyes of men.<sup>1</sup>

¶ When you go to put flowers upon a grave, what is the motive that prompts you?—to keep memory green? Doubtless; but is that all? Why do you wish to keep memory green? It is because you are looking forward as well as backward. You are convinced the old days will come again. If it were not for that hope, you could not plant your flower; you would rather let memory wither. Some have written of the pleasures of memory, and some of the pleasures of hope. But has it occurred to either that the pleasures of memory *are* the pleasures of hope? Has

<sup>1</sup> J. Keble.

it occurred to either that these are twin sisters, who cannot live apart? When hope dies, memory cries out to be killed; she cannot abide alone. When memory goes with her flowers to the grave, hope calls from the shadowy land, "Occupy till I come." If she did not hear that call, she could not plant her flower. My Lord tells me that when I build to His past I am prompted by His future. It is the light of Easter morn that leads me to the sepulchre; it is the gleam of resurrection that conducts me to the broken body, "As often as ye eat this bread, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come."<sup>1</sup>

(1) The sacrament confirms our faith *in the certainty of His coming*. He *shall* come; the Church is not for ever orphaned of His presence; the disciples need not mourn over a dead Christ; the weeping Virgin may dry her tears, for her Son liveth, glorified, exalted, King of kings and Lord of lords.

The first thing that we need in the anticipation of our Lord's second coming is to have the knowledge within us that were He to come to us now we should be found of Him in peace. "Be diligent," says St. Peter, "that ye may be found of him in peace." And the only peace in which we can be found, we who have our sins in the past, and our failures and imperfections in the present, is in the peace of the Divine reconciliation. And in this Sacrament, first of all, the consummated passion is preached to us through powerful sacramental action. Christ is evidently set forth as crucified among us. Through the union of the earthly action with our Lord's continued intercession in heaven, we learn that that death thus died is at the present moment being pleaded for us in all its reconciling efficacy before the Father, and then, when we draw nigh to Him in this Sacrament, He comes and gives Himself to us. Doing what? Assuring us, thereby, of God's goodness towards us, and that we are all members of the mystical Body of His Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people. The Holy Eucharist is the sacrament of Christian assurance, and they who are hushed into the peace of God by the sacramental kiss of Christ of the Eucharist can anticipate without fear His coming, for they will "be found of him in peace."<sup>2</sup>

¶ The Feast has gone on; for it has been God's, and not man's. It has had a power over Christendom which we cannot measure, but which we shall know one day. For it contains a promise

<sup>1</sup> G. Matheson, *Searchings in the Silence*, 223.

<sup>2</sup> Canon Body.

which may sustain us when its influence appears to be weakest, when the Church appears to be most rent by the factions against which it is bearing its silent, awful protest. It is written, that as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we show forth the Lord's death *till He come*. The Incarnation and Death and Resurrection of the Son of God were the fulfilments of all that men in the Old Dispensation were able to long for. The manifestation of Christ in the glory of His Father and of the Holy Angels is the highest object which we in this Dispensation are able to long for. It includes every craving for righteous government, for a perfect Society, for the adoption of our spirits, for the perfection of the faculties of our souls, for the full redemption of our bodies. It includes the fulfilment of every relationship, of all loving intercourse, which has been most imperfectly realized here, but which has been raised and sanctified by a diviner Communion. It includes the accomplishment of all earthly discipline and sorrow, fellowship with those whose faces we miss, but whose love must be far warmer than ever it was, because it is in more immediate contact with the perfect Love. It includes the apprehension of the order and beauty of God's creatures, when the veil of death which covers them has been taken away. It includes the ever-deepening sense of the meaning and force of that death which revealed the whole mind of God, which was the perfect Atonement for Man.<sup>1</sup>

(2) The second thing that is needed is this. If we are to be ready for Christ's coming, we must be numbered with those who, in the language of the Book of Revelation, are "sealed." And what is this sealing? A seal is that whereby an impress is made upon molten wax. And so it is here. There is a seal in which there is the image of Christ, and this image of Christ is to be imprinted on hearts that are melted in the furnace of contrition until they are all molten wax. There is a seal that bears the image of the King, and by the impress of that seal that image is stamped on those who are sealed. What is that seal if it be not that sacred rite in Christendom in which Christ Himself is present, in which Christ Himself impresses His own image upon the image of His elect? "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come"; for the Sacrament is not only the sacrament of assurance; it is the sacrament of increasing conformity.

<sup>1</sup> F. D. Maurice.

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The definition of a Sacrament seems to lack completeness, unless it be regarded not only as a sign but as a seal—a solemn federal act which involves mutual pledges, of fidelity on the one hand and of blessing on the other. The expression of the inner dispositions by appropriate symbol is by no means of uncommon occurrence in the sacred writings. When the Psalmist speaks of his own deliverances, and, in astonishment at their extent and magnitude, asks, "What shall I render?" he replies, as the most public and graceful utterance of his gratitude, "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord," and the next verse may be regarded as the translation of the symbol into language, "I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people." And our participation of the Holy Communion must be thus regarded as the fresh act of our espousals, as the solemn renewal of our covenant; as our surrender, entire and unhesitating, to the service of the Lord. It is thus that we confess Christ and witness of Him to the world. If we eat and drink without discerning this great purpose, we eat and drink unworthily; if we repudiate such purpose, either in thought or in act, we crucify in our measure "the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

(3) And last of all, what do we need as we are living now between this first and second Advent—looking for the coming of the Lord? Is it not the grace of perseverance, the power to hold on our way, and day by day to act more and more firmly? And does not He who came to save us, and is coming to raise us up to be partakers in His glory—does not He Himself come to us in this Sacrament to give to us this grace of perseverance? Is it not true of us what is said of Elijah in the mystical language of old? God said to him, Arise and eat; and he arose and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God. And so it is still. God says to us: "Wearied in life's journeying, burdened with life's burdens and anxieties and woes, eat, O friends; drink; yea, drink abundantly, O beloved"; and we draw nigh and eat of Him whose flesh is meat indeed, and drink of Him whose blood is drink indeed; and through His love we find strength in weakness and refreshment in weariness. And through the sacrament of perseverance, receiving into ourselves

the blessing of the first Advent, we wait in confident hope for the second coming of the Lord.

¶ I will give a brief parable to those who live in continual ebullitions of love, in order that they may endure this disposition nobly and becomingly, and may attain to a higher virtue.

There is a little insect which is called an ant; it is strong and wise, and very tenacious of life, and it lives with its fellows in warm and dry soils. The ant works during summer and collects food and grain for the winter, and it splits the grain so that it may not become rotten or spoiled, and may be eaten when there is nothing more to be found. And it does not make strange paths, but all follow the same path, and after waiting till the proper time they become able to fly.

So should these men do; they will be strong by waiting for the coming of Christ, wise against the appearance and the inspiration of the enemy. They will not choose death, but they will prefer God's glory alone and the winning of fresh virtues. They will dwell in the community of their heart and of their powers, and will follow the invitation and the constraint of Divine unity. They will live in rich and warm soils, or, in other words, in the passionate heat of love, and in great impatience. And they will work during the summer of this life, and will gather in for eternity the fruits of virtue. These they will divide in two—one part means that they will always desire the supreme joy of eternity; the other, that by their reason they will always restrain themselves as much as possible, and wait the time that God has appointed for them, and so the fruit of virtue shall be preserved into eternity. They will not follow strange paths or curious methods, but through all storms they will follow the path of love, towards the place whither love shall guide them. And when the set time has come, and they have persevered in all the virtues, they shall be fit to behold God, and their wings shall bear them towards His mystery.<sup>1</sup>

Not so in haste, my heart!  
Have faith in God and wait;  
Although He linger long,  
He never comes too late.

He never comes too late,  
He knoweth what is best;  
Vex not thyself in vain:  
Until He cometh, rest.

<sup>1</sup> M. Maeterlinck, *Ruysbroeck and the Mystics*, 132.



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Until He cometh, rest,  
Nor grudge the hours that roll;  
The feet that wait for God  
Are soonest at the goal;

Are soonest at the goal  
That is not gained by speed;  
Then hold thee still, my heart,  
For I shall wait His lead.<sup>1</sup>

¶ And the coming of the Bridegroom is so swift that He is always coming, and that He dwells within us with His unfathomable riches, and that He returns ever anew in person, with such new brightness that it seems as if He had never come before. For His coming is comprised beyond all limit of time, in an eternal *Now*; and He is ever received with new desires and a new delight. Behold, the joys and the pleasures which this Bridegroom brings with Him at His coming are boundless and without limit, for they are Himself. And this is why the eyes of the spirit, by which the loving soul beholds its Bridegroom, are opened so wide that they will never shut again. For the contemplation and the fixed gaze of the spirit are eternal in the secret manifestation of God. And the comprehension of the spirit is so widely opened, as it waits for the appearance of the Bridegroom, that the spirit itself becomes vast as that which it comprehends. And so is God beheld and understood by God, in whom all our blessedness is found.<sup>2</sup>

### CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, let us see to whom the proclamation is to be made.

1. *It is to be made to ourselves.*—The Lord's Supper is a presentation to our own minds of the great work of redemption. If it was said to the Galatians that before their eyes Christ, whom they had not seen in the flesh, had been evidently set forth crucified among them (Gal. iii. 1), so may it be said to us that, not only by the preaching of His Word, but by visible signs before our eyes, and spiritual realities to our hearts, Christ is set forth in the Holy Communion, in all His love and grace and mercy.

¶ The Lord's Supper may be celebrated without any spectators. It should be in public where it can be; but if there are

<sup>1</sup> Bayard Taylor.

<sup>2</sup> M. Maeterlinck, *Ruysbroeck and the Mystics*, 152.



none to look on, it may be otherwise. In Venice, in Milan, in Paris, and in other cities where Romanism prevails, five or six of us have met together in our room at our hotel, and we have had the true Lord's supper there, though there were none to look on; and probably if there had been, in some cities where we have partaken of it, we might have been amenable to the law. 'Tis a showing forth of Christ's death to ourselves. We see the bread broken, and see the wine poured out, and we ourselves see here, in symbol, Christ crucified; and we see as before our eyes, when we eat and drink, our interest in the sacrifice offered upon Calvary.<sup>1</sup>

2. *It is to be made to one another*, as members of the Body of Christ.—As instituted, the holy Service is nothing if not social, mutual. Scripture knows nothing of a solitary Eucharist. Therefore the rite has a *mutual* significance; it has some sacred thing to say, all round the circle, Christian to Christian. By his presence, by his partaking, "each is then a herald to the rest," telling it out that Jesus did indeed die, to rise again.

When at the Table of our Lord  
In silence all we kneel  
With broken bread and wine outpour'd  
To share the heavenly Meal;

Few though we be, and though the few  
Are feeble at the best,  
Yet each is here, if God is true,  
A prophet to the rest.

We to each other show the Death  
Of that slain Lamb we love,  
*Until He come* (the Scripture saith)  
In glory from above.

Yes, gathering here, each other all  
With solemn cheer we warn  
Of the Archangel's thunder-call  
And resurrection-morn.

Blest Sign of Christ's own victory won,  
Thy prophecies we prize;  
Oh, with what joy the eternal Sun,  
Thus heralded, shall rise.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C. H. Spurgeon.

<sup>2</sup> H. C. G. Moule, *In the House of the Pilgrimage*, 56.

3. *It is to be made to the world.*—The Lord's Supper is a confession before men of our faith; a testimony as to whose we are and whom we serve. So long as this ordinance exists in the Church of God, the world will not be left without a testimony for Christ. It is a sermon always in course of being preached. Its text is Christ, its argument is love; its appeal is, "Come unto me, all ye," etc. It preaches not only to those who draw near to it, "Eat, O friends, yea, drink," etc. (Cant. v. 1), but also to those who turn their back upon it, "Will ye also go away?"

¶ All the provinces of China in the month of May are astir with pilgrim crowds, moving up and down the rivers, and along the intersecting ways. It is the red-letter day of the ancestral cult, and is called "the Feast of Manifestation." Hundreds and thousands of miles are traversed to show filial regard for the last resting-place of the departed forefathers. After the viands have been presented, all weeds hoed up from the grave, and the ground trimmed, three or four sheets of white paper, kept in position by a stone, are placed on the apex of the mound, to show that the grave has a living guardian, and no one must dare to turn the soil to common uses. The symbolic act is recognized in all the courts of law. In the absence of that simple but effectual sign the peasant might drive his plough across the grave-plot and enlarge the border of his rice field, and no one would resist him. The little sign asserts an inviolable heritage.<sup>1</sup>

We gather to the sacred board  
Perchance a scanty band;  
But with us in sublime accord  
What mighty armies stand!

In creed and rite howe'er apart,  
One Saviour still we own,  
And pour the worship of the heart  
Before the Father's throne.

A thousand spires o'er hill and vale  
Point to the same blue heaven;  
A thousand voices tell the tale  
Of grace through Jesus given.

<sup>1</sup> T. G. Selby.

High choirs, in Europe's ancient fanes,  
Praise Him for man who died;  
And o'er our boundless Western plains  
His name is glorified.

Around His tomb, on Salem's height,  
Greek and Armenian bend;  
And through all Lapland's months of night  
The peasants' hymns ascend.

Are we not brethren? Saviour dear!  
Then may we walk in love,  
Joint subjects of Thy kingdom here,  
Joint heirs of bliss above!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Greenleaf Bulfinch.



THE ONE THING NEEDFUL.

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## THE ONE THING NEEDFUL.

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal.—1 Cor. xiii. 1.

1. THIS chapter, although a digression, is yet a step in the treatment of the subject of spiritual gifts (xii. 1, xiv. 40), and forms in itself a complete and beautiful whole. After the promise that he will point out a still more surpassing way, there is, as it were, a moment of suspense; and then *jam ardet Paulus et fertur in amorem* (Bengel). Stanley imagines "how the Apostle's amanuensis must have paused to look up in his master's face at the sudden change in the style of his dictation, and seen his countenance lit up as it had been the face of an angel, as this vision of Divine perfection passed before him." Writer after writer has expatiated upon its literary and rhythmical beauty, which places it among the finest passages in the sacred, or, indeed, in any writings. We may compare ch. xv., Rom. viii. 31-39, and—on a much lower plane—the torrent of invective in 2 Cor. xi. 19-29. This chapter is a Divine "prophecy," which might have for its title that which distinguishes Ps. xlv.—"A Song of Love" or "of Loves." And it is noteworthy that these praises of love come, not from the Apostle of love, but from the Apostle of faith. It is not a fact that the Apostles are one-sided and prejudiced, each seeing only the gift which he specially esteems. Just as it is St. John who says, "This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith," so it is St. Paul who declares that greater than all gifts is love.<sup>1</sup>

¶ "The greatest, strongest, deepest thing Paul ever wrote."<sup>2</sup>

¶ I never read 1 Cor. xiii. without thinking of the description of the virtues in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. St. Paul's ethical teaching has quite an Hellenic ring. It is philosophical, as resting

<sup>1</sup> Robertson and Plummer, *1st Corinthians*, 285.

<sup>2</sup> Harnack.

on a definite principle, namely, our new life in Christ; and it is logical, as classifying virtues and duties according to some intelligible principle.<sup>1</sup>

¶ For moral elevation, there is nothing in literature equal to this chapter. No Plato or Seneca ever uttered a sentiment of such transcendent beauty. Even in the Word of God I know of no parallel to the passage,—even in the Epistles of St. John, who wrote so much upon the subject, and learned his lesson on the Saviour's heart. It is the highest encomium of the Queen of Graces that genius ever indited; and what more could man, however inspired of God, say in her praise? Yet here is no exaggeration, no distortion of the virtue commended, no depreciation of any other Christian quality or duty. All is just, exact, proportionate, because all is Divine. Love, in whatever aspect regarded—whether in its abstract principle, or in its relative importance, or in its enumerated attributes, or in its immeasurable duration, or in its asserted superiority to faith and hope—is manifestly worthy of its apostolic designation—"the more excellent way."<sup>2</sup>

2. Let us examine the important word by which he designates this more excellent way. There is hardly a more difficult one to render exactly, in the whole compass of the New Testament. Our language has not a term which will exactly convey to an English reader the full idea. It is the word, indeed, by which at the same time God's love to man, and that feeble return of ours which is called love to Him, are both expressed. Still, our word "love" would not by any means do its full work in this chapter. We have that word in so many restricted senses—the love of friendship, the love of wedded life, even the love of lower and less worthy objects—that there would perhaps be danger of our escaping from the largeness of regard here insisted on into some of those smaller channels and abiding places, and satisfying ourselves that we had attained that which is required of us. For instance, when it is said, "Love suffereth long, and is kind," instead of forming in our minds the idea of some unusual indwelling grace which always and to all men suffereth long and is kind, we should be saying in our hearts, "O yes—we know that there is nothing one will not endure from an object deeply loved"; and

<sup>1</sup> E. L. Hicks, *Studia Biblica*, iv. 9.

<sup>2</sup> J. Cross, *Pauline Charity*, 6.

so of similar expressions, thereby missing the whole force and blessedness of the description.

The A.V. has unfortunately departed here from the earlier rendering "love" of Tindale and Cranmer (which the Revised Version has restored) and has followed the Vulgate *caritas*. Thus the force of this eloquent panegyric on love is impaired, and the agreement between the various writers of the New Testament much obscured. The aim, no doubt, of the Vulgate translators was to avoid the sensuous associations which the Latin word *amor* suggested. But the English word *charity* has never risen to the height of the Apostle's argument. At best it signifies only a kindly interest in and forbearance towards others. It is far from suggesting the ardent, active, energetic principle which the Apostle had in view. And though the English word "love" includes the affection which springs up between persons of different sexes, it is generally understood to denote only the higher and nobler forms of that affection, the lower being stigmatized under the name of "passion." Thus it is a suitable equivalent for the Greek word here used.

The word "charity" is open to grave objections. For, in the mind of the common English reader, it absolutely identifies the quality here spoken of with that very practice of almsgiving with which it is in one verse of the chapter so forcibly contrasted. And it is partly owing to the fact of the word "charity" having been used here by our translators that the chapter itself falls so dead on the ear of the English public. The word, as already said, was adopted from the writers of the Latin Vulgate. Of our own English versions, it is found in Wyclif, and in the Rheims Roman Catholic translation, both of which were made from the Latin. All the versions of the Reformation—Tindale, Cranmer, and the Geneva Bible—had "love" throughout; but King James's translators, to whom we owe our Authorized Version, unhappily returned to "charity," so much more easily mistaken, and so characteristically doing the work of Rome, in being capable of representing a mere external act, instead of the largeness of Christian spirit here described. "This," says Dean Alford, "is one out of not a few instances in which we owe our translators no thanks for having taken from us the life and spirit of our

genuine Reformation Bibles, and having gone back to the ambiguous and less expressive language of the version by which Rome supports so many of her errors."

The difference between the two terms is well exhibited in 1 John iv. 8, where the Vulgate reads: "God is charity." Even the A.V. would not accept this. In Luke xi. 42, the Latin has: "Ye pass over judgement and the charity of God," but in John v. 42: "Ye have not the love of God in yourselves." These passages suggest that it was the intention of the Latin editors to distinguish between love as a principle and its manifestation. Yet in Rom. v. 5, we have "the charity of God is diffused in our hearts." Again, Rom. viii. 35, "What shall separate us from the charity of Christ?" It has also to be observed that the Latin *caritas* had not precisely the same meaning as has attached itself to our "charity." With us it means beneficence, practical kindness, but in Latin it represents more the inward feeling. Hence Cicero speaks of "the charity which exists between children and parents." The whole case shows how wisely the Revisers have applied their principle—not always observed—which required the same English word to represent one in the original.

¶ Watts about the same time completed the group of the graces by adding his picture of "Charity." This picture is in the manner of the old Italian masters, and might well have been painted by Correggio or Andrea del Sarto. Charity is a calm, modern Madonna, the homely, motherly love which is a constant revelation of His heart who comforts us as one whom his mother comforteth, robed in richly coloured vesture, and tenderly encircling three bright, chubby-faced children with her arms—an attempt to picture the "motherliness of God." It is evident that the painter has a different and higher idea of charity than merely that of one who ministers to the poor, for in that case he would have represented the mother with a look of profound pity on her face, and the children with attenuated frames and gaunt, hungry countenances. The conception which he has of this virtue is that of St. Paul. Charity is more than the love that exists between man and woman. It has none of its excitement and passion. There is no selfishness or exclusiveness such as tinges even the most disinterested love between the sexes. It is more than benevolence, for it makes the rich as well as the poor the objects of its regard. It is not pity and a desire to help that it

feels, but a longing for their true happiness, for their attainment of that which is highest and best and most lasting, for those who are well-off as well as for those who are unfortunate, irrespective of condition. It is this realized identity of interests resting on the invisible union of souls. You see on the countenance which the artist places before you the patience of love, never in a hurry, but always waiting to begin. A meek and quiet spirit of love looks out of those thoughtful, kindly eyes, suffering long, bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things. She who seems so serene has learnt much of her wisdom by self-sacrifice, and much of her happy thoughts for the future from the trials and disappointments of the past. Humility reigns upon the brow, sealing her lips, so that she speaks not of, and tries to forget, the good she has done, and goes back from the world from her lovely act to the shade again, hiding even her love from itself.<sup>1</sup>

¶ "I do not know when I first heard the thirteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians; but it was no abstract idea of charity, it was the living image of my mother that informed every verse of it. Even the clause 'charity never faileth' (though I knew what the Apostle meant by it) suggested to me rather that, in the worst extremity, she would never fail to afford comfort and help."<sup>2</sup>

3. What is love? St. Paul answers, by giving a great number of properties of it, all distinct and special. It is patient, it is kind, it has no envy, no self-importance, no ostentation, no indecorum, no selfishness, no irritability, no malevolence. Which of all these is it? For if it is all at once, surely it is a name for all virtues at once. And what makes this conclusion still more plausible is that St. Paul elsewhere actually calls love "the fulfilling of the law": and our Saviour, in like manner, makes our whole duty consist in loving God and loving our neighbour. And St. James calls it "the royal law": and St. John says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Thus the chapter from which the text is taken seems but an exemplification in detail of what is declared in general terms by the inspired writers.

In one sense it is all virtues at once, and therefore St. Paul cannot describe it more definitely, more restrictedly than he does. In other words, it is the root of all holy dispositions, and grows and blossoms into them: they are its parts; and when it is de-

<sup>1</sup> H. Macmillan, *G. F. Watts*, 207.

<sup>2</sup> Rainy's daughter in *The Life of Principal Rainy*, i. 24.



scribed, they of necessity are mentioned. Love is the material (so to speak) out of which all graces are made, the quality of mind which is the fruit of regeneration, and in which the Spirit dwells; according to St. John's words, "Every one that loveth is born of God; . . . he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

¶ The chief point to remember is that here love is not regarded as a "gift" to be *compared* with other gifts, it is rather a spirit, or temper, in which all gifts are to be used or exercised. St. Paul constantly speaks of the Christian as a man or woman "in Christ," or as one in whom Christ dwells. If love is a synonym for the spirit and motive of Christ, when we say that all these gifts have to be exercised and used *with*, or *in*, love, we mean that they have to be exercised "in Christ." Just as to be "in Christ" infinitely moralizes the whole life, so to exercise a gift "in love" infinitely moralizes its use and exercise.<sup>1</sup>

4. No distinction is drawn between love to God and love to man. Throughout the chapter it is the root-principle that is meant; love in its most perfect and complete sense. But it is specially in reference to its manifestations to men that it is praised, and most of the features selected as characteristic of it are just those in which the Corinthians had proved defective. And this deficiency is fatal. Christian love is that something without which everything else is nothing, and which would be all-sufficient, even were it alone. It is not merely an attribute of God, it is His very nature, and no other moral term is thus used of Him.

¶ What is meant by love is not a preference for a certain number of special people, but a generic disposition. If you are going to test yourself by the words of Christ and His Apostles, you must ask yourself, not whether you love some person or persons who love you in return, but whether you so live amongst your fellowmen that those around you can see in you something of the comprehensive and inclusive love of God. "No man can love God except he evidence it in love to man."<sup>2</sup>

¶ One of the last, slowly murmured sayings of Whittier, the poet, as he lay dying, was this: "Give—my love—to—the world." And this is the world's supreme need to-day; more than our eloquence, or our knowledge, or our wealth, or all

<sup>1</sup> W. E. Chadwick, *The Pastoral Teaching of St. Paul*, 247.

<sup>2</sup> *Quintin Hogg*, 303.



else besides, it needs our love. True, even love may sometimes err; but the cure for love's mistakes is just more love. We never blunder because we love; we often blunder because we do not love enough. God help us all, that like Whittier, we may live and die, giving our love to the world!<sup>1</sup>

5. St. Paul's first application of his great principle refers to the use of "tongues"—a gift of ecstatic, and probably highly emotional utterance, and evidently very highly prized by the Corinthians. St. Paul at once refuses to consider the gift apart from the personality through which it is exercised. If that personality is not motived by love the speaker has become a mere instrument of sound without moral (or spiritual) character.

¶ Two applications at once suggest themselves: first, to what is termed *popular preaching*, however eloquent and clever, which does not proceed from a Christianized heart, which is not inspired by the love of souls, and whose object is not the salvation or edification of men; secondly, to the *emotional singing* of hymns whose words, if studied carefully apart from the music, are seen to be either heresy or nonsense, if they do not come perilously near to blasphemy.<sup>2</sup>

## I.

### INTELLECT OR CHARACTER?

1. St. Paul has been alluding in the preceding chapter to sundry and various endowments, abilities, and qualifications by which certain individuals in the early Christian community were gifted and distinguished by Divine providence, for the purpose of the more speedy propagation of the Gospel, and of attracting, retaining, and edifying new candidates for that community. And one purpose of the Apostle in referring to these extraordinary gifts and faculties is to put the favoured possessors of them upon their guard, lest they should become puffed up and self-complacent in the consciousness of their distinctions, and employ them for their own exaltation, instead of for the furtherance of God's honour in the welfare and progress of humanity.

Of the precise nature of these mysterious gifts, we know little more than that, having answered their temporary purpose, they

<sup>1</sup> G. Jackson, *Memoranda Paulina*, 51.

<sup>2</sup> W. E. Chadwick, *The Pastoral Teaching of St. Paul*, 248.

exist no longer. But whatever they were, it is obvious that the best way of applying for our own edification the Apostle's admonitions with respect to them will be to translate, as it were, those extraordinary gifts into their modern equivalents, which are variously distributed amongst us under the common name of "talents." We have no miraculous gift of Tongues; but we have scholars whose laborious industry has mastered languages to such a degree as almost to repair the inconvenience of Babel and to reduce its confusion to order. We have no miraculous gift of Prophecy: but we have men of far-sighted sagacity to discern the signs of the times, of profound wisdom to prepare for the reception and interpretation of those phenomena, and possessed of an eloquence little short of miraculous in propounding their projects and recommending them for acceptance by a free people. And whatever might be the precise nature of what St. Paul terms "gifts of healing, gifts of help, gifts of government," we can have no doubt that they each have their corresponding though ordinary and unmiraculous endowments in the present day, exhibited in the various evolutions of art, science, philosophy, political and religious administration; each of them, like the Pentecostal gifts, and like "every good and perfect gift," proceeding from the Father of Lights; each of them liable to misuse by the vanity of man; each of them therefore necessitating a word of caution in the spirit of the Apostle. Such gifts there are corresponding to those of tongues, of knowledge, of prophecy, of discovery, of contrivance or administration; gifts working through all the range of commerce, politics, the camp, the court, the Church, or in the fields of literature and science. These are the gifts which, under the names of talent, force, and genius, men (and no wonder) are ready to bow down before and worship; these are the gifts before which we are least reluctant and ashamed to offer homage, sometimes approaching to extravagance—gifts that are dazzling to the beholder, and cannot therefore but be more or less dangerous to the possessor; gifts that must be used with watchfulness lest they should bear that possessor up into the region of superciliousness; lest they should set him above the plain tasks, the common duties, the homely sympathies, the social kindnesses, the meekness, the modesty, the concession, the considerateness, and the fair construction which we owe to one another.

¶ In earlier days his standard had been almost purely intellectual, but in later life simplicity and charm and genuine goodness seemed to appeal to him most. He said, "The power of simple goodness is the greatest in the world."<sup>1</sup>

¶ The idea was early and unmistakably impressed on our minds, that *to be good* was the main thing in life; that there was nothing else that could come into any comparison or competition with this; that in fact nothing else mattered *greatly*. We knew that this was what our parents desired for us above all else, though I do not think there was much direct speaking about it, beyond a little explanation of our Sunday lessons, or an occasional word when we were saying our prayers.<sup>2</sup>

¶ Occasionally I preached a sermon at home over the red sofa cushions;—this performance being always called for by my mother's dearest friends, as the great accomplishment of my childhood. The sermon was, I believe, some eleven words long;—very exemplary, it seems to me, in that respect—and I still think must have been the purest gospel, for I know it began with, "People, be good."<sup>3</sup>

2. Since it is plainly because of its fruits that St. Paul magnifies the grace of love, we shall hardly be doing injustice to his argument by saying that, after all, the distinction he draws is between intellect and character, as things to be sought after for ourselves and revered in others. The text condenses it into an epigram, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as the blare of the trumpet or the clang of the cymbal."

¶ St. Paul knew nothing of the modern orchestra. He meant by his simile, presumably, only showy noise and display, loud enough to attract any attention however little cultivated. We may read into it yet other lessons, not less important; for the trumpet and the cymbal have their right and due place in the orchestra, and contribute their necessary share to the "concord of sweet sounds," and to the intention of the great Master whose meaning they help to interpret. But by themselves what are they but "sound and fury, signifying nothing"? They are useless, and without beauty, unless they take a subordinate place, and unless they co-operate for something greater than themselves.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters of Mandell Creighton*, ii. 484.

<sup>2</sup> *Early Letters of Marcus Dods*, 18.

<sup>3</sup> Ruskin, *Præterita*, i. 25.

<sup>4</sup> A. Ainger, *The Gospel and Human Life*, 33.

3. It was within a comparatively small ring-fence of a struggling church, separated by hard and fast lines from the heathen and corrupt populace outside, that the problem had risen for solution, which St. Paul sets himself to solve. It was on purely religious questions—the diffusion of the knowledge of Christ by the ability and fervour of those already possessing it—that this question of Intellect *versus* Character had arisen. But as it is a question going down to the deeps of human personality, it never disappears, but is ever present, and ever pressing for our decision. It is a perennial danger, because a perennial temptation—that steady, never-changing temptation to value ability, talent, learning, accomplishment, even “cleverness,” the cheapest and most worthless of them all—to value these above goodness, and to ignore the certain truth that, where these things are not given by nature (as must be the case with the majority), they are not to be acquired by aping those who have them, by the mere mimicry of “gifts,” which everywhere abounds, the tinsel which obtains acceptance as the glorious gem of the mountain or the sea, the surface cleverness which we daily meet, the borrowed tricks of style and manner and talk, the assimilative skill, wherein is no reality, no root, because no heart.

¶ An over-’cute woman’s no better nor a long-tailed sheep—she’ll fetch none the bigger price for that.<sup>1</sup>

¶ One to whom he often spoke of the deepest things of life and of death will never forget his saying one day just after the attack of illness in December: “I have come to see that cleverness, success, attainment, count for little; that goodness, or, as F. (naming a dear friend) would say, ‘*character*,’ is the important factor in life.”<sup>2</sup>

4. St. Paul did not malign or disparage gifts. Himself a man of rarest genius, is it likely he would stultify his own mission and function by disparaging the great gifts which, inspired and guided by love, were helping to mould the whole future of the world? “Covet earnestly the best gifts,” he said; every talent and faculty that God has bestowed on your mysterious individuality welcome and turn to the Master’s use.

True it is, and within the range both of illustrious historical

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Tulliver, in *The Mill on the Floss*.

<sup>2</sup> *Life and Letters of George John Romanes*, 323.

precedent and of frequent personal observation and experience, that the best and most brilliant and distinguished gifts may be directed, harmonized, moderated, and controlled by the most frank and unaffected humility, and by the most tender and generous sentiments of humanity. But it will hardly be denied that while the highly gifted in literature and science are very frequently, and perhaps even in exact proportion to their eminence, men of modest stillness and humility, there is a very great temptation to the contrary. There is an instinct of self-glorification through these gifts which requires close looking after. There is a temptation to forget that the only legitimate dedication of such faculties, and the implied condition on which they are bestowed, must be such as shall promote the ulterior advantage of the whole community (as St. Paul shows in the preceding chapter representing us as all members of one body).

¶ I remember one thing he said which made a great impression. Something led us to talk about genius and character. I was praising genius, and taking no notice of character as its great buttress. He turned and said quietly, and with some sadness, "I have seen more young men fail in early life from the absence of character than from the absence of genius."<sup>1</sup>

¶ In 1876 Leslie Stephen and his sister-in-law, Lady Ritchie (Miss Thackeray), were staying at a neighbouring farmhouse, and Ruskin saw a good deal of them. He liked Stephen, in spite of differences of opinion and temperament, and mentions talk with him as one of the agreeable things at Brantwood; but Stephen on his side "could not be at ease with Ruskin." Between Lady Ritchie and Ruskin there was fuller sympathy, as is seen in her description of their meeting:—

"Mrs. Severn sat in her place behind a silver urn, while the master of the house, with his back to the window, was dispensing such cheer, spiritual and temporal, as those who have been his guests will best realize,—fine wheaten bread and Scotch cakes in many a crisp circlet and crescent, and trout from the lake, and strawberries such as grow only on the Brantwood slopes. Were these cups of tea only, or cups of fancy, feeling, inspiration? And as we crunched and quaffed we listened to a certain strain not easily to be described, changing from its graver first notes to the sweetest and most charming of vibrations. . . . The text was that strawberries should be ripe and sweet, and we munched and

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott*, ii. 33.



marked it then and there; that there should be a standard of fitness applied to every detail of life, and this standard, with a certain gracious malice, wit, hospitality, and remorselessness, he began to apply to one thing and another, to one person and another, to dress, to food, to books. . . . Listening back to the echoes of a lifetime we can most of us still hear some strains very clear, very real and distinct, out of all the confusion of past noise and chatter; and the writer (nor is she alone in this) must ever count the music of Brantwood oratory among such strains. Music, oratory—I know not what to call that wondrous gift which subjugates all who come within its reach.”

God uses us to help each other so,  
Lending our minds out.<sup>1</sup>

5. That there may be gifts without love to use them aright—this is St. Paul’s warning, and this warning must be declared afresh in every age. If love is the one source of all that is best in human character, we need not wonder any more why St. Paul should be careful to compare or contrast it with faith and hope, and declare that it is the greatest. For indeed love is the atmosphere in which alone the light of faith and hope can burn. Love creates character, and character, in return, makes lovely and makes lovable. There is a witchery and a glamour which attend intellectual gifts in life, winning admiration and popularity, and even the semblance of affection. But when Death has come in to place the object of these at a distance from earth and time, it is to something far other than “cleverness” that Memory turns instinctively to brood over and cherish. Not the gifts, but the graces, then; not the cleverness, not the accomplishments or learning, not the wit and humour, but the touches of human sympathy and tenderness: the self-denial, the patience and forbearance, the nobility of aim, the steadfastness of purpose, the fact that the atmosphere of life and society was higher, nobler, purer, where such an one moved and spoke—just all those things which St. Paul found to have their source and spring in love.

¶ My opinion of Lord Althorp is extremely high. In fact, his character is the only stay of the Ministry. I doubt whether any person has ever lived in England who, with no eloquence, no brilliant talents, no profound information, with nothing in short but plain good sense and an excellent heart, possessed so much

<sup>1</sup> E. T. Cook, *The Life of Ruskin*, ii. 291.



influence both in and out of Parliament. His temper is an absolute miracle. He has been worse used than any Minister ever was in debate; and he has never said one thing inconsistent, I do not say with gentlemanlike courtesy, but with real benevolence. Lord North, perhaps, was his equal in suavity and good-nature; but Lord North was not a man of strict principles. His administration was not only an administration hostile to liberty, but it was supported by vile and corrupt means,—by direct bribery, I fear, in many cases. Lord Althorp has the temper of Lord North with the principles of Romilly. If he had the oratorical powers of either of those men, he might do anything. But his understanding, though just, is slow, and his elocution painfully defective. It is, however, only justice to him to say that he has done more service to the Reform Bill even as a debater than all the other Ministers together, Stanley excepted.<sup>1</sup>

## II.

## THE DISCOVERY OF LOVE.

1. What is the origin of love? Turn to the Revised Version of the Epistles of John and you will find there these words: "We love because he first loved us." "We love"—not, "We love him." This is the way the old version has it, and it is wrong. "We love because he first loved us." Look at that word "because." There is the cause. "*Because* he first loved us." The effect follows that we love Him—we love all men. Our heart is slowly changed. Because He loved us, we love. Contemplate the love of Christ, and you will love Him. Stand before that, and you will be changed into the same image, from tenderness to tenderness. There is no other way. You cannot love to order. You can only look at the lovely object, and fall in love with it; you cannot command yourself to do it. And so look at the great sacrifice of Christ, as He laid down His life all through life, and at His death upon the Cross of Calvary; and you must love Him. Love begets love. It is a process of induction. You put a piece of iron in the mere presence of an electrified body, and that piece of iron for a time becomes electrified. It becomes a temporary magnet in the presence of a permanent magnet, and as long as you leave the two side by side, they are both magnets.

<sup>1</sup> Macaulay, *Life and Letters*, 175.

Remain side by side with Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us, and you too will become a permanent magnet, a permanent attractive force; and like Him you will draw all men—be they white men or black men—unto you. That is the inevitable effect of love.

With all thy heart, with all thy soul and mind,  
Thou must Him love and His behests embrace;  
All other loves, with which the world doth blind  
Weak fancies, and stir up affections base,  
Thou must renounce and utterly displace,  
And give thyself unto Him full and free,  
That full and freely gave Himself to thee.

Then shalt thou feel thy spirit so possesst,  
And ravisht with devouring great desire  
Of His dear Self, that shall thy feeble breast  
Inflame with love, and set thee all on fire  
With burning zeal, through every part entire,  
That in no earthly thing thou shalt delight,  
But in His sweet and amiable sight.

Thenceforth all world's desire will in thee die,  
And all earth's glory, on which men do gaze,  
Seem dirt and dross in thy pure-sighted eye,  
Compar'd to that Celestial Beauty's blaze,  
Whose glorious beams all fleshly sense doth daze  
With admiration of their passing light,  
Blinding the eyes, and lumining the spright.

Then shall thy ravisht soul inspired be  
With heavenly thoughts far above human skill,  
And thy bright radiant eyes shall plainly see  
Th' Idea of His pure glory present still  
Before thy face, that all thy spirits shall fill  
With sweet enragement of celestial love,  
Kindled through sight of those fair things above.<sup>1</sup>

¶ With Professor Blackie the course of true love did not at first run smooth. But the Professor refused to believe that Mr. Wyld (her father) would persist in his displeasure. "You shall soon (he wrote to her) see your father, dearest, sitting as comfortably at my fireside as he does at his own. I believe

<sup>1</sup> Spenser.

that the only invincible power in the world is love; I shall ply your father with that and that only, and if I do not conquer—Christianity never conquered.”<sup>1</sup>

¶ Edward Irving went to see a dying boy once, and when he entered the room, he just put his hand on the sufferer’s head, and said, “My boy, God loves you,” and went away. And the boy started from his bed, and he called out to the people in the house, “God loves me! God loves me!” One word; one word! It changed that boy. The sense that God loved him had overpowered him, melted him down, and had begun the making of a new heart.

¶ “Please, ‘ma,’” began Atim, “please no whip Mees Kittee. She say true word. Me black, me nigger. Me no white, me no prettee, but Jesus He no think about black face, and He lofe me all the same. He lofe me, me too glad. Mees Kittee speak true word, but me not sorree any more.”

The girl’s black eyes glistened with feeling, but she looked very happy, and she showed her ivory teeth.

“Atim, my dear Atim!” said Mrs. Temple. “I’m glad along with you! What do other things matter after all if one is sure of that?”

“Jesus, He make me white as snow me never see in me country. Me lofe Him! Me lofe Him!” She laughed aloud in her perfect pleasure. Truly she could afford to forgive and forget.

Kitty, stony-faced, had been a study during Atim’s plea for her. She had refused utterly to beg pardon, and stood as perverse a little mortal as one could see anywhere. Gradually, as Atim spoke, her expression became softer. Her warm heart was touched. The moment Atim stopped, she flung herself into the black girl’s arms.

“I love you, Atim!” she cried. “I love your black face. I’m the wickedest sinner alive! If I loved Jesus the least little bit, I wouldn’t behave so.” She kissed the girl many times, and fondled her. Then Kitty turned to her mother. “Mother, mother, punish me! Make me do something I don’t like at all. I’ll do it just to show how sorry I am. I don’t want to be naughty, but it’s my nature! I feel awful bad, awful!”<sup>2</sup>

2. As if on purpose to obviate all mysticism, St. Paul is careful to describe love by its practical results. A tree is known by its fruit; and as you might describe an oak tree to a child

<sup>1</sup> John Stuart Blackie, i. 207.

<sup>2</sup> J. F. Hogg, *The Angel Opportunity*, 131.

as the tree that is covered with acorns; or a vine as the tree from which the purple clusters are hanging, so St. Paul delineates love by the fruit it bears. By love, he seems to say, I mean that quality which "suffereth long and is kind," puts up with a great deal, and, trying to find excuses for the misdemeanour of an adversary, is kind and gentle and forbearing. Love envieth not the good fortune, the reputation, the precedence of another, vaunteth not herself, is not puffed up; gives herself no airs of consequence, nor plumes herself upon even real superiorities, inasmuch as it is contrary to the very essence of love to be making those comparisons which alone could supply materials for self-conceit; doth not behave herself unseemly, nor in any manner incongruous with the correlative circumstances in which she is placed; or inconsistent with the rights, the feelings, or even, if it can be helped, the honest prejudices of those with whom she is placed. And she is the less likely to fall into this unseemliness because she seeketh not her own; is not incessantly on the watch to assert her own presence and to claim attention to her own prerogative; is not easily (or perhaps it may here mean "vehemently") provoked; imputeth no evil where it can be avoided; rejoiceth not in iniquity—as so many do, who cannot hear a piece of discreditable news but they sit on thorns until they can find an opportunity to repeat it—but rejoiceth in everything that is consistent with truth, justice, and integrity. Beareth all things, or more probably here, *concealeth* all things concerning another person which, without injury to the claims of social laws, it would be kind and considerate to conceal; believeth all things favourable to such a person which there is any colourable reason to believe; even hopeth those which she finds it difficult to believe; and endureth all things which it may be an advantage to others that she should endure.

¶ Henry Drummond has told us how in the heart of Africa, among the great lakes, he came across black men and women who remembered the only white man they ever saw before—David Livingstone; "and as you cross his footsteps in that dark continent, men's faces light up as they speak of the kind doctor who passed there years ago. They could not understand him; but they felt the love that beat in his heart."

¶ In London, in 1872, one Sunday morning a minister said

to me, "I want you to notice that family there in one of the front seats; and when we go home I want to tell you their story." When we arrived home I asked him for the story, and he said, "All that family were won by a smile." "Why," said I, "how was that?" "Well," said he, "as I was walking down a street one day I saw a child at a window; it smiled, and I smiled, and we nodded. So it was the second time; I nodded, she nodded. It was not long before there was another child, and I had got into a habit of looking and nodding; and pretty soon the group grew, and at last, as I went by, a lady was with them. I did not know what to do. I did not want to nod to her, but I knew the children expected it, and so I nodded to them all. And the mother saw I was a minister, because I carried a Bible every Sunday morning. So the children followed me the next Sunday and found I was a minister. And they thought I was the greatest preacher they knew, and their parents must hear me."<sup>1</sup>

¶ How is it that the poets have said so many fine things about our first love, so few about our later love? Are their first poems their best? or are not those the best which come from their fuller thought, their larger experience, their deeper-rooted affections? The boy's flute-like voice has its own spring charm; but the man should yield a richer, deeper music.<sup>2</sup>

O Youth immortal—O undying love!

With these by winter fireside we'll sit down,  
Weaving our snows of honour like a crown;  
And sing as in a grove,  
Where the full nests ring out with happy cheer,  
"Summer is here."

Roll round, strange years; swift seasons, come and go;  
Ye leave upon us only an outward sign;  
Ye cannot touch the inward and divine,  
While God alone does know;  
There seal'd till summers, winters, all shall cease  
In His deep peace.

Therefore uprouse ye winds and howl your will;  
Beat, beat, ye sobbing rains on pane and door;  
Enter, slow-footed age, and thou, obscure  
Grand Angel—not of ill:  
Healer of every wound, whene'er thou come,  
Glad, we'll go home.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> D. L. Moody, *The Faithful Saying*, 44.

<sup>2</sup> George Eliot, *Adam Bede*.

<sup>3</sup> Dinah M. Mulock.





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For now we see in a mirror, darkly ; but then face to face ; now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as also I have been known.—1 Cor. xiii. 12.

1. ST. PAUL has been speaking of gifts or endowments on which members of the Corinthian Church were priding themselves. There was a great deal of emotion in the new Christian societies of that day. Emotional impulses broke out in irregular exhortations, in utterances of praise, in expressions of conviction, in acts of healing ; and these impulses, which sometimes led to disorderly competition, needed to be controlled. The first principle that St. Paul lays down with regard to them is that their proper object is to be of some use to the Christian society. They were given not for the profit or distinction of the individual, but for the benefit of the Church. Then he bids his readers see that all gifts, even those from which the Church might derive most advantage, were essentially inferior to love.

He goes on to describe, in words worthy of what he praises, the beauty and blessedness of love. The ultimate distinction that he ascribes to it is that it *lasts* ; it does not fail, or undergo changes, it abides. Herein especially was it contrasted with prophesying and tongues and knowledge. Prophecies will be done away, tongues will cease, knowledge will be done away. St. Paul was no doubt referring here to the emotional gifts which were used and valued in the Churches of that age. But he lets us see that he regards these as representing all intellectual conceptions and utterances concerning spiritual things. "For we know in part, and we prophesy (or preach) in part : but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away." St. Paul would hardly have spoken thus if he had not himself been perplexed by the incompleteness and unsatisfying

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character of the accounts which we can give to ourselves and others of the ways of God. He was accustomed to take refuge in the thought that our conceptions and language are the expressions of partial knowledge, such as will be superseded in time by maturer and completer knowledge. And he had evidently found support in the two analogies which he proceeds to give.

(1) "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things." Every grown-up person is familiar with this experience. We can remember fanciful conceptions of our childhood which now make us smile; things appeared to us in very different proportions from those in which we see them now. Our knowledge has grown, and the growth of it inevitably alters our apprehensions and judgments. It is not unreasonable to expect that what has already happened to us will happen to us again. May we not hope that in the future world, which we cannot now understand, but which will seem so different to us from the present, the contradictions and perplexities which baffle us now will in some way be made to disappear? There is a presumption that, even on this side of the grave, as the generations of Christians grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, they may outgrow doctrines and rules which were natural to earlier stages.

(2) The other analogy is that which forms our text. We are reminded of the difference between a person seen as reflected by an imperfect and confusing mirror and the same person seen face to face. Let us hold—the Apostle taught—that God is now seeing and knowing *us*; but let it not be assumed that we as yet see and know God—except most imperfectly.

2. The expression which St. Paul here uses is a very suggestive one. He has been speaking of the contrast in value between knowledge and love, showing that all our knowledge, of whatever sort it may be, is of little worth compared with love. Love is that which alone is truly precious in human life, and love endures; while all our ideas are destined to dissolve and pass away, like the changing shapes of the clouds from the heaven's azure. Love is that constant blue above, and love above is

eternal. Knowledge is partial, and therefore the utterance of the truth in prophecy or preaching must be partial. And just as the man puts off the thoughts of the child, so the man is ever putting off and changing even his manhood's thoughts that have been as those of a spiritual childhood, for those that are to him new and better, even as he changes his raiment. This process must go on to the last hour of mental life and activity; and what we think the best thought must in time give place to a better; and the best that can be dreamed is still a dream and a shadow compared with the substance and the reality itself. "For," says the Apostle (to render his words quite literally), "we are looking now through a mirror in (or upon) an enigma."

3. Human knowledge is imperfect, fragmentary, partial. We can scarcely be said to "know"; we are only "learning to know" by slow and painful effort; our best attainment is one-sided, relative, incomplete. Our expression even of what we think we know is partial and imperfect. Not only do we "know in part," but we "prophecy in part." Even those whom God has called to be His spokesmen can but communicate their message in language which is inadequate to express the truth fully. And why? Because here and now, in this present life and with our limited faculties, we can only see "by means of a mirror." All that we can discern is as it were but a reflection of the absolute archetypal realities, a blurred, confused, imperfect image of glory upon which as yet we cannot gaze. And even that reflection which we seem to see can only be described in language which is like a riddle, challenging us to guess its meaning and unravel its secret, but hinting, not defining, hard to interpret, liable to be misunderstood. In the face of eternal truths we are but children; thinking, feeling, speaking, with the limited capacities, the baffled eagerness, the constant and inevitable misunderstandings of children: yes, but like children too, with the hope and promise of growth, development, attainment hereafter.

For St. Paul's *now* is balanced by a *then*. "When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away." Beyond this life of mediate and imperfect knowledge expressed in the language of riddles lies the promise of a life where know-

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ledge will be immediate, distinct, consummated in the vision of God "face to face"; when partial knowledge will be exchanged for knowledge so full, so complete, so personal, that St. Paul dares to compare it with God's present perfect insight into each human soul;—"then shall I know fully even as also I have been fully known."

Meanwhile, in this our present state of limited and imperfect knowledge, amid all the uncertainties and perplexities of life, there is one sure clue, one indispensable guide to direct us—"love never faileth."

The idea is one, but the Apostle gives it in two parallel statements, after the manner of Hebrew poetry. And each statement has its two sides—"now" and "then." Thus—

### I. SEEING.

1. Now we see in a mirror, darkly.
2. Then face to face.

### II. KNOWING.

1. Now I know in part.
2. Then shall I know even as also I have been known.

### I.

#### SEEING.

It is often hard to get people to *see*. Their gaze is on the outward—the shows of sense and of time—on the seen; and therefore to the New Testament writers it is but blindness. To them he who does not see the unseen does not see at all. But, given the vision of faith, it will develop from faltering dim beginnings, and its horizon will become richer and more heavenly. It will rejoice in the mirror. It will not even resent the riddle. And why? Because it is conscious of moving onwards to the Face.

¶ One summer evening sitting by my window I watched for the first star to appear, knowing the position of the brightest in the southern sky. The dusk came on, grew deeper, but the star did not shine. By-and-by, other stars less bright appeared, so that it could not be the sunset which obscured the expected one. Finally, I considered that I must have mistaken its position, when suddenly a puff of air blew through the branch of a pear-



tree which overhung the window, a leaf moved, and there was the star behind the leaf.

At present the endeavour to make discoveries is like gazing at the sky up through the boughs of an oak. Here a beautiful star shines clearly: here a constellation is hidden by a branch: a universe by a leaf. Some mental instrument or organism is required to enable us to distinguish between the leaf which may be removed, and a real void: when to cease to look in one direction, and to work in another. Many men of broad brow and great intellect lived in the days of ancient Greece, but for lack of the accident of a lens, and of knowing the way to use a prism, they could but conjecture imperfectly. I am in exactly the position they were when I look beyond light. Outside my present knowledge I am exactly in their condition, I feel that there are infinities to be known, but they are hidden by a leaf.<sup>1</sup>

¶ The late Professor T. C. Edwards says that St. Paul got his metaphor of the mirror from Philo, who got it from Plato, and he mentions the striking passage in Plato's *Republic*, where Socrates is illustrating the slow development of our faculties by the case of men who have been immured in a cavern and are suddenly dragged into the sunlight. Not a man at first can make out, in the unaccustomed glare, a single object as it is. "Hence, I suppose, habit will be necessary to enable him to perceive objects in that upper world. At first he will be most successful in distinguishing shadows; then he will discern the reflections of men and other things in water, and afterwards the realities; and after this he will raise his eyes to encounter the light of the moon and the stars, finding it less difficult to study the heavenly bodies and the heaven itself by night than the sun and the sun's light by day." Finally, he will see the sun as it is, not as it *appears* in water or on alien ground, and then he will conclude that the sun is the author of the seasons, the guardian of the visible world, and the cause of all he and his friends used to see. On some such lines the idealism of St. Paul runs respecting the soul and its spiritual vision as it ascends from the partial to the perfect, from the fleeting to the real. One may note, in passing, the joy of discovering a kinship between such minds as Plato, St. Paul, and Wordsworth, children of ages far distant, but each illumined by the immanent Reason, by the "Light which lighteth every man."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Richard Jefferies, *The Story of My Heart*, 188.

<sup>2</sup> R. M. Pope, *The Poetry of the Upward Way*, 152.

## i. Now.

"Now we see in (by means of) a mirror, darkly."

St. Paul's meaning is explained in an illustration. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things." With the humility of true wisdom and the sweetness of a large understanding, he reckons the attainments of this life as no more than childish acquisitions, when compared with that which we shall reach when we are home. Our powers are undeveloped, immature, juvenile, in this life; our spiritual insight is therefore defective, and our knowledge only preparatory or initial.

1. *In (or by) a mirror.*—When St. Paul lived and wrote, mirrors were not made of glass, as the Authorized Version of this passage erroneously suggests, but of some metal. The best, being made of silver, were costly, and it took a good deal of skill and labour to make the surface of the metal quite even. And however well made a mirror might be, it was always in danger of losing its clearness by exposure. St. Paul and his readers were not of the class that could indulge themselves in costly articles of luxury. A cheap and inferior mirror was better than nothing; but we can picture to ourselves what the mirrors used by the humbler classes were like, if we recall the reflections of ourselves which we have casually seen in tarnished and uneven surfaces of metal.

Let any one imagine himself to be before such a mirror, with a friend standing by him. He can see the friend's face reflected as if he were looking through the mirror. But the face, so seen, will be distorted and dim, and if he desires to examine any feature accurately he will be baffled, so that the face will be in some respects an enigma or puzzle to him. What a contrast he will perceive, if he turns his head, and looks at the actual face of the friend at his side! Then he will see and know his friend, as his friend who was not using the mirror was seeing and knowing *him*.

Thus St. Paul's similitude is to be explained. His words, literally rendered, are—"For we see now through a mirror in

an enigma (or puzzle), but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know as fully as I was known." He is comparing the blurred and confusing reflection of an object with the object as seen directly. And he uses this image to illustrate what he assumes to be puzzling in the ways of God as we can now apprehend them.

What we see at present is a sort of reflection of truth, not the very truth itself. A mirror may be very useful; but it can never give the accurate idea of the very figure, the very person, presented in it. If its copy of the person be ever so accurate, still it is not defective only, it is also misleading: the right side has become the left, and the left hand in the picture is awkwardly performing the functions of the right hand in the original: thus the effect produced is different, however carefully represented the details and the particulars. A mirror, too, can hold but one image at a time: if it be preoccupied by one figure, it is unavailable for another. And if, in addition to these essential defects of accuracy and limitations of capacity, there be also the slightest flaw in the glass or cloud upon the surface, there is an end at once of all beauty and of all truth in the representation, and what was before only defective becomes now a distortion and a caricature. And how much more expressive would be the figure in the Apostle's days, when not glass but stone or metal was commonly used for the purpose spoken of; when the colouring therefore of every object must have been lost in the reflection, and nothing would remain but a meagre and blurred outline to carry to the eye the impression of face or figure or landscape!

2. *Darkly*.—That is, as the margin tells us, "in a riddle." The original is identical with our English word "enigma." What a mirror is to the eye a riddle is to the ear, only that the latter expresses more clearly the incompleteness of our knowledge, and the necessity that it should be thus partial. But just as a reflection implies a reality, so a riddle involves an answer. What we know of God comes to us wrapped in mystery; it comes as an answer to our needs, but in giving this answer it raises new questions for our solution—questions which St. Paul tells us by this very phrase we cannot hope now altogether to solve. We see God and Divine things amid the perplexities and contra-

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dictions of this imperfect state, part, surely, of the clouds and darkness which are round about Him; we behold Him through life's great riddle, and though the dimness which it brings rises ever before us from this lower earth like a mist, those who look for Him see the far-off shining of His face, and know the maze is not without its clue, that His Hand, strong and tender, holds the thread of the Divine love, from which, while we hold it fast, neither life nor death, neither things present nor things to come, shall be able to separate us.

It is in relation to the highest truths that it is most important constantly to recognize the limitation of our knowledge and the imperfection of our expression of it. It is these truths of which it is most necessary to remember that we apprehend them only as "through a mirror," express them only as "in a riddle"; learn only by slow degrees to recognize a little better what the image means, to understand a little more fully the depths of mystery wrapped in the words of the riddle. How many an error has sprung from the assumption that human language could be a full and adequate expression of Divine realities, in forgetfulness of St. Augustine's warning, *Verius cogitatur Deus quam dicitur, et verius est quam cogitatur*; for "when we have said all that we can say concerning Him, we have said nothing worthily." How many an assault upon the Christian faith has been based upon the assumption that infinite truths could be compressed into the moulds of human words! Yes, and how often the defenders of the Faith have exposed themselves to attack by letting it be thought that this was their belief, this the position which they were bound to maintain at all hazards.

¶ Take for an example *the nature of God*. The very attributes of God are an enigma to us. What is infinity? What is omniscience? What is omnipresence? What is eternity? Each is a riddle. Take *the character of God*. Is it not all shadowed forth to us in the Scriptures, in the Old Testament at all events, in dark sayings? "It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart" (Gen. vi. 6). Take *the mode of our redemption*. We firmly believe in the truth of an atonement made for sin by the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. But is not every word in that statement an enigma? Who can explain, unless he would "darken counsel by words without knowledge" (Job xxxviii. 2), the precise mode and

principle of that work of Christ, which is yet a sinner's one hope? Take *the operation of the Holy Spirit*. Who can tell us how the Holy Spirit works in the hearts of men? "Thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John iii. 8). Take *the process of the future judgment*. Who will say that a thousand objections which he cannot answer might not be urged by human ingenuity against each part of that doctrine? We know it; but it is "in a riddle"; it is as a dark saying. Or take, once more, for an example, *the whole conception of heaven*, of the future life of the saved; and O, ten thousand times more, of the future life of the lost. The revelation is made to us, made on the authority of God, but made to us also in human words, and therefore also made "in an enigma."<sup>1</sup>

¶ Evermore it remains true that we see darkly. It is necessary; it is part of our education; we do not require to know much just yet—a little here goes a long way. I do not need to know the metaphysical nature of God, or the state and occupations of the dead, or the destiny of the heathen, or how many shall be saved, or how long the world is to last under present arrangements, and when the great historic drama of our planet will enter upon another act, or what rising hierarchies of angels there are, and what they look like, and what they do, and how they subsist: all this is irrelevant to my condition. We see darkly, but we see enough. We feel that there must be reality behind these appearances, that behind the universe must be a Mind that made it; behind time must be eternity; behind the carnal kingdoms of this world, the kingdom of eternal love that shall one day replace them; behind man's soul, with its hankerings and hungers and thirsts and clamours, a God who can satisfy them; behind all the sin of the world, a salvation from it.<sup>2</sup>

## ii. Then.

"Then face to face."

No doubt there is a verbal reference here to the words spoken of Moses: "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold" (Num. xii. 6-8). We have the same contrast

<sup>1</sup> C. J. Vaughan.

<sup>2</sup> J. S. Jones, *Seeing Darkly*, 22.



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here: "Now we see through a glass, in a dark speech . . . but then face to face." We shall all have that sort of communication with God Himself, which, alone of all men, the mediator of the first dispensation was privileged to enjoy in his day.

Higher, higher,  
Purified by suffering's fire,  
Rise, my soul, until thy flight  
Pierce its way to heaven's light.  
Clearer, clearer,  
Until, ever drawing nearer,  
There shall burst upon thy sight,  
Through the darkness of earth's night,  
All the eye of faith may see,  
Set in God's eternity.<sup>1</sup>

### II.

#### KNOWING.

In the language of St. Paul "knowledge" denotes the advanced or perfect knowledge, which is the ideal state of the true Christian. It appears only in his Latin Epistles (from Romans onwards), where the more contemplative aspects of the Gospel are brought into view, and its comprehensive and eternal relations more fully set forth. But the power of the preposition appears in the verb, no less than in the substantive. In this passage it is forced upon our notice. The partial knowledge is contrasted with the full knowledge which shall be attained hereafter. This distinction is missed in the Authorized Version here, though it is observed in 2 Cor. vi. 9, "as unknown, and yet *well known*."<sup>2</sup>

#### i. Now.

"Now I know in part."

How much in the history of knowledge, as we read it with the comment of that most stern of critics, Time, seems to be but a record of misapplied ingenuity and dreary waste of energy. We mark one generation contemptuously discarding the studies and the methods of its predecessors and substituting its own, doomed in their turn to become antiquated and obsolete. Pro-

<sup>1</sup> William H. Birckhead.

<sup>2</sup> Lightfoot, *A Fresh Revision*, 69.



cesses of thought which claimed to be capable of solving every contradiction are found wanting, and are abandoned for ever. Enthusiasms which boasted of their power to regenerate a dead age prove their insufficiency, and even turn themselves to worse corruption. Controversies which were treated as questions of life and death are pronounced to be barren logomachies or, at the best, of comparative insignificance, when, viewed from a distance, they assume their proper proportions.

¶ In each successive age we see the tyranny of some dominant form of thought, or subject of study, or scheme of learning, claiming to be supreme and final, to have the right to suppress its rivals, and destined to last for ever. Wherein lay the error? Was it not that one age after another failed to take to itself St. Paul's warning that all human knowledge is partial, relative, progressive? Each form of thought, each branch of study, served some useful end, but the mistake lay in the tendency to regard passing forms of thought as final, partial methods of study as universal; and its consequence was a timid and anxious clinging to the past when the inevitable hour of change arrived. The dialectic of the Schoolmen served to sharpen the reasoning faculties, but long ere it was displaced it had degenerated into the merest quibbling, and stunted rather than developed the growth of the intellectual powers. Yet its adherents were slow to confess that the "science of sciences" was no infallible instrument for the attainment of knowledge, and that the exercises of the schools were perilously liable to beget a habit of mind which valued victory in argument more highly than the elucidation of truth.<sup>1</sup>

¶ Most of the hot debates which burn in the history of theology have been about things which were looked at in a mirror; and the fact that no one could see these things just as they were, was precisely what made them such excellent matter for debate.<sup>2</sup>

1. There are secrets hidden in every tiny flower and grain of sand, in every throbbing nerve and aching heart, which our keenest wisdom cannot discover. Every tear is a profound mystery, every sigh is a world of unimaginable things. No one can tell us why we laugh or why we cry. No one can read his brother's mind or understand his own. He who has studied human nature most closely has but touched the surface of it.

<sup>1</sup> A. F. Kirkpatrick, *Cambridge Review*, xv. 85.

<sup>2</sup> F. G. Peabody, *Afternoons in the College Chapel*, 9.

Those who can tell us most about man can only prove that he is fearfully and wonderfully made. Men who have been investigating for a lifetime the sins, sorrows, and diseases of the world find that these are still the everlasting riddle; and he whose faith has given him the clearest vision of God, knows that these are but "a portion of His ways, and the thunders of His power none can understand." The highest philosophy still prattles and stammers and guesses like a child, and we all have to kneel down humbly declaring that our wisdom is but dim-eyed folly, and repeating these words of St. Paul: "Now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I have been known."

¶ The science of all sciences is the knowledge of God. To know Him, what He has done for man, what He *is* to man, what man is to Him,—nay, what He is in Himself, to know at once the tenderness of His love and the mystery of His Being—this is the highest exercise of man's mind; this is the purest joy of man's heart; this is the only one true aim of life; this alone can be called life; this is the life the pulses of which begin to beat within us in this world; this is the life which swells out into its full perfection in the world to come; for "this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."<sup>1</sup>

¶ Speaking of God as being infinite in His nature and attributes, he said: "I cannot grasp this infinity: I am not able to comprehend God; I know but in part. *If I knew Him I would cease to worship Him.*"<sup>2</sup>

¶ If I knew that I had fathomed all the love or all the wisdom of God, how faith and reverence and trust would fall away from a being that such powers as mine could grasp.<sup>3</sup>

2. If we can know in part what the holiest Mind has thought, how the purest Heart has loved, what the most gracious Wisdom has provided, "let us follow on to know." If we must confess ourselves, at best, agnostics, let it be progressive agnosticism—"If we do not know to-day, we shall hope to know to-morrow."

¶ Is not all positiveness of necessity partiality? To say, "This is true, I know it," and to leave no room for the limitations and qualifications that we cannot know, for all those outside

<sup>1</sup> R. W. Randall, *Life in the Catholic Church*, 159.

<sup>2</sup> D. Brown, *Memoir of John Duncan*, 248.

<sup>3</sup> Phillips Brooks, *Life*, 80.

influences of unseen truth which we must be working on and drawing from this fact that we have found,—is there not some folly here? Is not the true wisdom something like this?—I know so far as it goes this truth is sacredly and wholly true, but that very truth forbids me to believe that it has not developments and ramifications reaching far out into the universe of associated truth with which it is connected. Now I *know*, and I prize my knowledge as the gift of God and hold it sacred; but “I know in part,” I wait till that which is in part shall be done away.<sup>1</sup>

(1) Let it be recognized that the highest knowledge we may here attain will not be clear of an agnostic haze. To comprehend infinitude and eternity our mind would have to be infinite and eternal; but we may apprehend where we cannot comprehend. We may voyage on a sea which we cannot compass. Whenever we follow on to know perfect Love, eternal Righteousness, absolute Will, we are compelled to take up Wesley’s strain—

God only knows the love of God.

But this is relatively true of all knowledge. Even the flower in the crannied wall has a last citadel of mystery which no effort of the human mind can capture.

¶ We see “in part,” but we do see Him, though it be only in part; the more lovely the prospect, the nearer it must be to the truth. Again, we cannot *fancy* truth; we may fancy *about* truth when we are in the carnal mind, being led by the outward word, whether it be of a teacher whom we call the Church, or of an individual whom we call a theologian. In either case, what we see is what we fancy *they* see. We only *see* Truth when we are taught immediately by the Spirit of Truth. Let us take our revelation simply, as it is given us, and let us believe that the Lord spoke truly and *is* come to be the Guide and Teacher of the hearts of His children. His desire is that we should look up into His face and know Him as “Our Father.”<sup>2</sup>

(2) That we only know now in part persuades us, constrains us to give all diligence towards fuller knowledge. In natural scenery, mountains appeal to us most and touch the strangest deeps of our nature, not when they stand out clear in sharp outline, but when their strength and curve are softened by a tender, almost transparent, haze. It is then that the call of the

<sup>1</sup> Phillips Brooks, *Life*, 111.

<sup>2</sup> R. W. Corbet, *Letters from a Mystic of the Present Day*, 40.

mountains is most eloquent, most effective. And to the earnest soul in quest of God, the richest moments are those when some increased knowledge has been gained, some fresh experience of truth has been treasured, with a feeling that more, far more, remains yet to be won. "We all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory."

¶ It is inscribed on the grave of T. H. Green, "He died learning."

¶ Isaac Newton had one theory of the universe, and John Hutchinson had another, but they both accepted the fact of the universe, about the detailed constructions and processes of which they differed so vigorously. One may believe that the earth stands still, another may believe that it performs certain revolutions; but they both believe in the earth itself, they both have confidence in its foundations, and they both draw their sustenance from the same generous bosom. So it must be to a very great extent with the first idea of God. We must receive the idea without discussion, without critical or metaphysical inquiry. We must begin with the idea that *God is*, and day by day grow in our knowledge concerning Him, and in our love towards Him.<sup>1</sup>

(3) Our knowledge here as elsewhere must begin as a "venture of faith." Faith is the pioneer of all knowledge. The first harvest of the field, the first voyage on the sea, was due to heroism of faith. Belief had to precede experience. Why then should any one demand faith's dismissal when we come to the choicest knowledge of all? The great word of the Gospel—"Whosoever believeth"—is not a casual or official demand: it is rooted in the eternal order revealed to us. Columbus was not more learned than all his contemporaries: they stopped where experience stopped; he made the venture of faith. The whole story of human piety, of man's apprehension of God, is a story of faith's heroism. When we read that Enoch walked with God, it means that he ventured on a road that had to be travelled in order to be known. The moan of the agnostic in earnest was wrung from the heart of Job, when he cried—

"Oh that I knew where I might find him,  
That I might come even to his seat!

Behold, I go forward, but he is not there;

<sup>1</sup> J. Parker.

And backward, but I cannot perceive him;  
On the left hand, when he doth work, but I cannot behold  
him:

He hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him."

What then? Experience refuses to go further, turns back,  
and would have him give up the quest. But faith stands beside  
him in the cloud and driving tempest, faces the blast with lighted  
face, cheers him to make the grand venture—

"When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

I think if thou couldst know,  
O soul that will complain,  
What lies concealed below

Our burden and our pain;  
How just our anguish brings  
Nearer those longed-for things

We seek for now in vain,—

I think thou wouldst rejoice, and not complain.

I think if thou couldst see,

With thy dim mortal sight,

How meanings, dark to thee,

Are shadows hiding light;

Truth's efforts crossed and vexed

Life's purpose all perplexed,—

If thou couldst see them right,

I think that they would seem all clear, and wise, and bright.

And yet thou canst not know,

And yet thou canst not see;

Wisdom and sight are slow

In poor humanity.

If thou couldst *trust*, poor soul,

In Him who rules the whole,

Thou wouldst find peace and rest:

Wisdom and right are well, but Trust is best.<sup>1</sup>

## ii. Then.

"Even as also I have been known."

If the Bible speaks of a disadvantageous "Now" it is always  
able to put over against it a bright and glorious "Then." And  
these two must always be taken together. Look only at the

<sup>1</sup> Adelaide Anne Procter.



"Now," with its limitations and imperfections, forgetful of the "Then," and your philosophy will be a chain of despair; but view earth revolving, as it surely does, in the light of a not far-distant heaven, and your thoughts will be gathered up into a song of hope. It was this that enabled St. Paul to write these words expressive of our present disadvantage without dissatisfaction or regret. "We see through a glass darkly, we know in part!" Those words tell all the intellectual struggle and pain through which a great mind passes before it accepts its defeat. They are the words of intellectual resignation in presence of those inscrutable problems before which lesser minds beat themselves in fruitless pain; grand words of one who has assayed the heights and depths of knowledge to prove them past finding out, and yet is calm. Not the words of an impatient thinker, or the petulance of a little mind not strong enough to wait, but the language of a great faith resting hopefully in God.

¶ Porphyry, in his *Principles of the Theory of Intelligibles*, seems to me to have written a warning which might fitly stand at the beginning of this book—"By our intelligence we say many things of the principle which is higher than the intelligence. But these things are divined much better by an absence of thought than by thought. It is the same with this idea as with that of sleep, of which we speak up to a certain point in our waking state, but the knowledge and perception of which we can gain only by sleeping. Like is known only by like, and the condition of all knowledge is that the subject should become like to the object."<sup>1</sup>

I know the night is heavy with her stars,—  
 So much I know,—  
 I know the sun will lead the night away,  
 And lay his golden bars  
 Over the fields and mountains and great seas,  
 I know that he will usher in the day  
 With litanies  
 Of birds and young dawn-winds. So much I know,—  
 So little though.

I know that I am lost in a great waste,  
 A trackless world  
 Of stars and golden days, where shadows go  
 In mute and secret haste,

<sup>1</sup> M. Maeterlinck, *Ruyssbroeck and the Mystics*, 6.



Paying no heed to supplicating cries  
Of spirits lost and troubled,—this I know.

The regal skies  
Utter no word, nor wind, nor changing sea,—  
It frightens me.

Yet I believe that somewhere, soon or late,  
A peace will fall  
Upon the angry reaches of my mind;  
A peace initiate  
In some heroic hour when I behold  
A friend's long-quested triumph, or unbind  
The tressed gold  
From a child's laughing face. I still believe,—  
So much believe.

Or, when the reapers leave the swathèd grain,  
I'll look beyond  
The yellowing hazels in the twilight-tide,  
Beyond the flowing plain,  
And see blue mountains piled against a sky  
Flung out in coloured ceremonial pride;  
Then haply I  
Shall be no longer troubled, but shall know,—  
It may be so.<sup>1</sup>

1. Then shall we see face to face; then shall I know even as I am known. *Even as I am known.* That is a good thing to rest upon, even in this stage—that, however little I know about you and about myself and about God, I am known to Him, every bit of me, and the way that I take, and the thoughts I think, and the fears which disturb me, and the doubts which worry and the sins which oppress. All is spread before Him in the searching light which scans and tries the uttermost secrets, and from which nothing can be hid. He knows me as well as He knows Himself. He knows every heart-beat, and every struggle, and every penitential sigh, and every passing shame and regret, and every striving after better things. He knows all the possibilities that are in me, the worst and the best, and all the helps, incentives, and pardons that they call for. And He never misreads, misunderstands, or misjudges. He is always fair, just, true, and pitiful. “And I shall know even as I am known.”

<sup>1</sup> J. Drinkwater, *Poems of Men and Hours*, 5.

A myriad worlds encompass ours;  
 A myriad souls our souls enclose;  
 And each, its sins and woes and powers,  
 The Lord He sees, the Lord He knows,  
 And from the Infinite Knowledge flowers  
 The Infinite Pity's fadeless rose.

Lighten our darkness, Lord, most wise;  
 All-seeing One, give us to see;  
 Our judgments are profanities,  
 Our ignorance is cruelty;  
 While Thou, knowing all, dost not despise  
 To pardon even such things as we.<sup>1</sup>

2. There are two things that may be said about this knowledge.

(1) *It will be thorough.*—It will be a knowledge through and through (for that is the meaning of the word). God is a heart-searching God. There is no secret so deeply buried in us but God sees it as in the light of day. Even such is the insight into His truth and character, into His word and works, into His ways and will, which is promised to those of us who shall be faithful unto death, in a world beyond the grave. It will be indeed a thorough knowledge.

(2) *It will be comprehensive.*—God has not only a minute insight; He has also a large insight. He not only sees particulars; He sees each one of us as a whole. You know how impossible that is for any one of us with regard to another. We see particular faults and particular virtues, but we are not able, in very many instances, nor ought we, to speak decisively of the character as a whole, whether for good or evil. But God sees this also. God could judge each one of us at this moment. He could say, Notwithstanding this fault, that man is my servant; notwithstanding that good quality, this man I never knew. And it shall be thus with *our* knowledge hereafter. Not only shall we believe and understand this item and that item, separately, of God's truth, but we shall see it all in its connection, in its combination, in its reconciling harmony, in its perfect unity. There will no longer be any spaces and gaps in our knowledge. There will be no longer crevasses and chasms, to be vaulted over

<sup>1</sup> Susan Coolidge.

on a staff of faith. "The crooked" will then have been "made straight," and "the rough places plain" (Isa. xl. 4); and "all flesh will see," as in one view, "the salvation of God" (Luke iii. 6). Then will not only wisdom be, as she ever has been, "justified of her children" (Matt. xi. 19), but also the ways of God will be universally and finally justified to men.

Knowledge—who hath it? Nay, not thou,  
Pale student, pondering thy futile lore!  
A little space it shall be thine, as now  
'Tis his whose funeral passes at thy door:  
Last night a clown that scarcely knew to spell—  
Now he knows all. O wondrous miracle!<sup>1</sup>

### III.

#### WHAT SHALL WE SEE AND KNOW?

1. *God.*—Human knowledge, then, imperfect as it must necessarily be, is consecrated by the thought that it has for its goal the vision of God, of whose Being and Doing all that we can see and learn here is the reflection, "broken lights" piercing earth's mists from the central sun upon which no mortal man could gaze unveiled and live.

(1) The entrance on the next world must bring with it a knowledge of God such as is impossible in this life. In this life many men talk of God, and some men think much and deeply about Him. But here men do not attain to that sort of direct knowledge of God which the Bible calls "sight." We do not see a human soul. The soul makes itself felt in conduct, in conversation, in the lines of the countenance; although these often enough mislead us. The soul speaks through the eye, which misleads us less often. That is to say, we know that the soul is there, and we detect something of its character and power and drift. We do not see it. In the same way we feel God present in nature, whether in its awe or in its beauty; and in human history, whether in its justice or in its weird mysteriousness; and in the life of a good man, or the circumstances of a generous or noble act. Most of all we feel Him near when conscience, His inward messenger, speaks plainly and decisively to us. Con-

<sup>1</sup> Thomas B. Aldrich.

science, that invisible prophet, surely appeals to and implies a law, and a law implies a legislator. But we do not see Him. "No man hath seen God at any time"; even "the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father," is only said to have "declared him," since in Him the Godhead was veiled from earthly sight by that mantle of Flesh and Blood which, together with a human soul, He assumed in time.

But after death there will be a change. It is said of our Lord's glorified Manhood, united as it is for ever to the Person of the Eternal Son, that "every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him." Even the lost will then understand much more of what God is to the universe and to themselves, although they are excluded from the direct vision of God.

(2) What will that first apprehension of God, under the new conditions of the other life, be? There are trustworthy accounts of men who have been utterly overcome at the first sight of a fellow-creature with whose name and work they had for long years associated great wisdom, or goodness, or ability; the first sight of the earthly Jerusalem has endowed more than one traveller with a perfectly new experience in the life of thought and feeling. What must not the first direct sight of God be, the Source of all beauty, of all wisdom, of all power, when the eye opens upon Him after death! "Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty" were words of warning as well as words of promise. What will it not be to see Him in those first few moments—God, the Eternal Love, God, the consuming Fire—as we shall see Him in the first five minutes after death!

¶ An Indian officer, who in his time had seen a great deal of service, and had taken part in more than one of those decisive struggles by which the British authority was finally established in the East Indies, had returned to end his days in this country, and was talking with his friends about the most striking experiences of his professional career. They led him, by their sympathy and their questions, to travel in memory through a long series of years; and as he described skirmishes, battles, sieges, personal encounters, hair-breadth escapes, the outbreak of the mutiny and its suppression, reverses, victories—all the swift alternations of anxiety and hope which a man must know who is entrusted with command, and is before the enemy—their interest in his story, as was natural, became keener and more exacting. At last he

paused with the observation, "I expect to see something much more remarkable than anything I have been describing." As he was some seventy years of age, and was understood to have retired from active service, his listeners failed to catch his meaning. There was a pause; and then he said in an undertone, "I mean in the first five minutes after death."<sup>1</sup>

(3) Distinguish between those who say, "We know nothing," and those who say with the Apostle, "We know in part." When we are only speculating, God will seem to us very incomprehensible, very unknowable; His nature and mode of working do always baffle our understandings: "how unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past tracing out!" But then we turn to the revelation of God which has been given us in our Lord Jesus Christ. As we study that, we shall hardly be inclined to complain of necessary ignorance; rather shall we be moved to exclaim with St. Paul that in Christ "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." The impressions concerning God and the Father which we received from the Lord Jesus grow into secure knowledge as they are verified by life and experience, and as we learn what the conditions of human progress and well-being are. How, we ask, can men live without faith and hope and love, and how can faith and hope and love be awakened and preserved without Divine righteousness and encouragement and goodness to which they may respond?

2. *Our fellows.*—This chapter is the glorious hymn of love. The religious fervour, the intellectual conquests, the accumulated philosophy of succeeding centuries, have produced nothing nobler than this. You cannot "praise" this perfect utterance. You might as well "approve" the perpetual rainbow over the Fluela Fall or the after-glow in an Alpine sky. The Apostle exhausts the resources of inspired eloquence in exposition of love. And he looks for the maturing, the completion, the perfection of this Christian grace. When such full-blossomed love has come, we shall see with perfect clearness. In proportion as it comes, we shall see better. When love has her perfect work, we shall see so distinctly that the vision may be said to be "face to face." Yes; that we have always understood. But what is it that we shall see? What but the object of our love—our fellow-man?

<sup>1</sup> H. P. Liddon.



Towards whom have you exercised love? Your brother-man, your neighbour, your friend, your rival, your foe. Then, as your love deepens, your vision of him will clear. As you think more charitably of him you will understand him better. When love towards him is perfected, you will see him face to face.

¶ Doubtless the words "face to face" apply primarily to the vision of God in the perfected manhood. But, as the greater includes the lesser, this recognition of God involves the recognition of loved ones.

¶ Pilgrims no longer, nor longer disguised from one another by the suspicions and concealments of this life, nor hidden from each other, as here the most closely linked hearts must be, by the necessary solitude and loneliness of every individual life, in which we must live so largely and, in all our tenderest sensibilities, so entirely alone. There hearts shall open to hearts spontaneously as the flowers to the sun, and there soul shall communicate itself to the soul it loves as naturally as the dews nourish the white lilies of the wood. The armour of light, so often blood-stained and torn, is unlaced; the shield and sword laid down at the King's feet, and the soft clothing of peace put on.

¶ "It is not easy, at the best, for two persons talking together to make the most of each other's thoughts, there are so many of them."

This was a remark made by the Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table to the assembled guests. And the company looked as if they wanted an explanation. So the Autocrat went on.

"When John and Thomas, for instance, are talking together, it is natural that among the six there should be more or less confusion and misapprehension."

The people thought that the Autocrat had suddenly gone mad. The landlady turned pale. The old gentleman opposite thought the Autocrat might seize the carving-knife. But he proceeded to explain that at the fewest six personalities are distinctly to be recognized as taking part in the dialogue between John and Thomas. There is (1) the real John, known only to his Maker; (2) John's ideal John, never the real one, and often very unlike him; (3) Thomas's ideal John, never the real John, nor John's John; but often very unlike either. In precisely the same way there are three Thomases. There is Thomas as he really is, as God sees him; Thomas as he thinks he is; and Thomas as John thinks he is. In all, there are six people. No wonder two disputants often get angry when there are six of them talking and listening at the same time!



¶ There is a truth in the word that marriages are made in heaven. You may remember that Charles Kingsley had put on his grave, which was to be his wife's, "We have loved, we love, we shall love." Death does not, as most of us know, put an end to love. We love the dead because they are the living. Death separates, it is all that it can do; it cannot annihilate. Surely then, when death is destroyed the law of separation will be disannulled, and those who loved and love will meet again and enjoy one another's love again. I say then, because we shall have full knowledge of our past life, because we preserve our individuality in the resurrection change, because in the other world we know and are known, because we are perfectly manifested by our spiritual bodies, and because by means of their powers we shall perfectly discern, because of the mutual attraction of love—love which was stronger than death, we shall, I feel confident, recognize one another in the life of the world to come. And it will be a full recognition; our hearts in perfect sympathy will beat one with another, answering love for love.<sup>1</sup>

3. *Ourselves*.—At our entrance on another world we shall know our old selves as never before. The past will lie spread out before us, and we shall take a comprehensive survey of it. Each man's life will be displayed to him as a river, which he traces from its source in a distant mountain till it mingles with the distant ocean. The course of that river lies sometimes through dark forests which hide it from view, sometimes through sands or marshes in which it seems to lose itself. Here it forces a passage angrily between precipitous rocks, there it glides gently through meadows which it makes green and fertile. At one time it might seem to be turning backwards out of pure caprice; at another to be parting, like a gay spendthrift, with half its volume of waters; while later on it receives contributory streams that restore its strength; and so it passes on, till the ebb and flow of the tides upon its bank tells that the end is near. What will not the retrospect be when, after death, we survey, for the first time, as with a bird's-eye view the whole long range—the strange vicissitudes, the loss and the gain, as we deem it, the failures and the triumphs of our earthly existence; when we measure it, as never before, in its completeness, now that it is at last over!

This, indeed, is the characteristic of the survey after death, that it will be complete.

<sup>1</sup> F. Watson, *The Christian Life Here and Hereafter*, 240.

## 390 THE PARTIAL AND THE PERFECT

There no shade can last,  
In that deep dawn behind the tomb,  
But clear from marge to marge shall bloom  
The eternal landscape of the past.

In entering another world we shall know as never before what we have been in the past; but we shall know also what we are. Our present thoughts, feelings, mental habits, good and bad, are the effects of what we have done or left undone, of cherished impressions, of passions indulged or repressed, of pursuits vigorously embraced or willingly abandoned. And as our past mental and spiritual history has made us what we are, so we are at this very moment making ourselves what we shall be.

¶ Richard le Gallienne delighted us some years ago by a brilliant essay on "Life in Inverted Commas." He represented himself as watching from the top of an omnibus in Fleet Street the capture of a notorious plagiarist by detectives in the employ of the Incorporated Society of Authors, who led him away secured between strong inverted commas. This set him thinking. And he looked round at his companions in the 'bus. "There was the young dandy just let loose from his band-box, wearing exactly the same face, the same smile, the same neck-tie, holding his stick in exactly the same fashion, talking exactly the same words, with precisely the same accent, as his neighbour, another dandy, and as all the other dandies between the Bank and Hyde Park Corner. Looking at these examples of Nature's love of repeating herself," he goes on, "I said to myself: Somewhere in heaven stands a great stencil, and at each sweep of the cosmic brush a million dandies are born, each one alike as a box of collars. Indeed, I felt that this stencil process had been employed in the manufacture of every single person in the omnibus: two middle-aged matrons, each of whom seemed to think that having given birth to six children was an indisputable claim to originality; two elderly business men to correspond; a young miss, carrying music and wearing eyeglasses; and a clergyman discussing stocks with one of the business men; I alone in my corner being, of course, the one occupant for whom Nature had been at the expense of casting a special mould, and at the extravagance of breaking it!" To be sure "*I, myself*," am the original one. And each one of us is an "*I, myself*!"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C. F. Aked.

THESE THREE.

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### THESE THREE.

But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three ; and the greatest of these is love.—1 Cor. xiii. 13.

1. If St. Paul had left us nothing but this exquisite hymn in praise of heavenly love, he would have established his claim to be a great religious genius. Happily it loses nothing in the English Version. The scholars who translated the Bible for James I.'s government seldom failed to rise to a great occasion ; and this chapter in the Authorized Version is one of the finest bits of prose poetry that have been written in our language. But the lyric rapture is St. Paul's own. He was not, perhaps, a poet by nature ; and a Rabbinical education was enough to dry up any but a very copious spring of poetic talent. But every now and then he is carried quite out of himself, and his words glow with a white heat of fervour and emotion. To read the thirteenth chapter after the twelfth, in which he discusses the relative merits of speaking with tongues and prophesying, is almost startling. "The more excellent way" once mentioned, the tide of pure inspiration flows swift and strong.

2. But even more remarkable than the sublime poetry of this chapter is the concluding verse : "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three ; but the greatest of these is love." In this verse St. Paul has found an absolutely complete and satisfactory formula for the Christian character. Faith, hope, and love, with love in the place of honour—is not this Christianity in a nutshell ? Within a few years after the Ascension, St. Paul has not only penetrated to the very heart of Christ's teaching, but has given us the kernel of the whole Gospel in one of those illuminating phrases which are a necessity for every great movement. So at least the Church has always felt. The three emblematic figures

of the "theological virtues," as they were called, have been favourite themes of Christian art and Christian eloquence all over the world. What the cardinal virtues, Justice, Fortitude, Prudence, and Temperance were to pagan antiquity; what Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity were to the French Revolution; what the Rights of Man were to the founders of the American Republic; what the three stages in the spiritual ascent—Purification, Illumination, Union with God—have been to mystics of all ages and countries, that Faith, Hope, and Love have been and are to the Christian. The imitation of Christ means the life of Faith, the life of Hope, the life of Love.

¶ Greek philosophy had proclaimed four cardinal virtues—justice, prudence, temperance, fortitude. Christian philosophy, following St. Paul, has taught during nineteen centuries that there are three specifically Christian graces—they are more than virtues—three primary and fundamental spiritual dispositions, which must dominate and permeate all true Christian character—Faith and Hope and Love.

This is one of the greatest of the great texts of the Bible. Let us take it in six parts—

Faith.

Hope.

Love.

These Three.

These Three Abide.

The Greatest of these Three.

### *FAITH.*

1. St. Paul has written as vigorously of faith, if not with as much seraphic eloquence, as he here writes of love. He penned the most intellectual and profound of all his Epistles—that to the Romans—to indicate the essential excellence, the justifying and soul-saving power of faith. We who have come to receive the truth which filled and fired the soul of the Apostle Paul have learned that by faith the just live. It is a rational and necessary spiritual ingredient of the truest manhood. We regard it as the channel through which God's righteousness pours into the soul; as our gate of access into the kingdom of grace, standing like the



Propylæa at Athens before the Acropolis, and giving entrance to the temple not only of love, but also of wisdom. St. Paul went so far as to say that any moral activity into which this quality did not enter was vitiated and unworthy. In one of his letters he describes faith as the light by which the soul walks: "A light that never was on sea or land," but which glows in the mind of man. To his thinking this virtue was so needful and important that the whole doctrine which he proclaimed he called by this name. He speaks of "preaching the faith" which he once persecuted, meaning by it both the Christian doctrine and the Christian Church. Our warfare he calls "the fight of faith"; so that in his thirteen letters, from the First Epistle to the Thessalonians to the letters addressed to Philemon, St. Paul sounds forth a thousand notes from this golden string.

2. What is the antithesis of faith? Is it Reason? Do I believe some things because I am convinced by evidence that they are true, and other things because the Church tells me to believe them, or because it is a meritorious act to force myself to believe them? Is faith an act of submission to authority? Is there any truth in the answer of the child, who, according to the story, said, "Faith means believing what you know to be untrue"? Look out some of the places where faith is mentioned in the New Testament, and see whether it is ever opposed to Reason. You will find that it never is: it is opposed to *sight*. Faith is not the acceptance of certain historical propositions on insufficient evidence. It is trust in God and goodness.

It is the resolution to stand or fall by the noblest and highest hypothesis that we can conceive. It is the spirit of Athanasius when he stood "against the world"; of Luther when he said, "God help me, I can do no otherwise"; of Job when he said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him"; of the three children in the furnace when they said, "He will deliver us out of thy hand, O King. But if not, we will not serve thy gods." It is the spirit which has given courage to all the martyrs to face death. Faith is the confidence that somehow or other the right must triumph, that God is stronger than Satan.

¶ I resolved that at any rate I would act as if the Bible *were* true; that if it were not, at all events I should be no worse off

than I was before; that I would believe in Christ, and take Him for my Master in whatever I did; that assuredly to disbelieve the Bible was quite as difficult as to believe it; that there were mysteries either way; and that the best mystery was that which gave me Christ for a Master. And when I had done this I fell asleep directly. When I rose in the morning the cold and cough were gone; and though I was still unwell, I felt a peace and spirit in me I had never known before, at least to the same extent; and the next day I was quite well, and everything has seemed to go right with me ever since, all discouragement and difficulties vanishing even in the smallest things.<sup>1</sup>

(1) *Faith is trust in the saving power of Christ.*—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" would seem to be the simplest of all directions. Many, in Apostolic times, hesitated to believe, but none hesitated as to what belief was. A heathen or pagan never asks a missionary what is meant by faith. The very simplicity of the act prevents its definition. Like time and space, the more we think about faith, the less we understand it. It must be felt, not analysed. It cannot be analysed. Many a Christian life has been mournfully chequered by dark and cheerless seasons, from the habit of thinking about faith instead of the object of faith, about the acts of the mind instead of the truths of God, the manner of believing instead of the testimony to be believed. Faith leads the soul to act on what it credits. It includes not only the belief of what is true, and the desire of what is good, but the choice of what is right. We may believe many things which have no possible connection with our conduct. Many of the propositions of Scripture are not the proper objects of trust, though they are of belief. We believe on the ground of evidence, we trust on the ground of character. We believe a truth, we trust a person. I might believe and not trust, but I cannot trust and not believe. So the specific act of faith which unites to Christ terminates upon His person, an existing, living, loving personality. It is not a doctrine concerning Christ that saves me, but trust in the saving power of Christ. It is not a specific theory of faith, but the practical grasp of faith, that saves. Salvation is not the formation of a right creed in my understanding; it is the quickening of a spiritual life in my soul.

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Ruskin to his father in E. T. Cook's *Life of Ruskin*, i. 271.

¶ Faith is that strong buoyant confidence in God and in His love which gives energy and spirit to do right without doubt or despondency. Where God sees that, He sees the spring and fountain out of which all good springs: He sees, in short, the very life of Christ begun, and He reckons that to be righteousness; just as a small perennial fountain in Gloucestershire is the Thames, though it is as yet scarcely large enough to float a schoolboy's boat; and just as you call a small seedling not bigger than a little almond peeping above the ground, an oak; for the word "justify" means not to be made righteous, but to reckon or account righteous.<sup>1</sup>

¶ I am not sure that we are much the better for our attempted definitions of Faith. Baxter connects it with the doctrine of the mystical union; Lampe defines it as a willingness to be saved by Christ; Halyburton and Owen as a cordial acceptance of the offer; Sandeman as simple belief in simple testimony. Well, a man is sometimes very little the better for a definition, and all these perplex as well as enlighten. But "none perish that Him trust"—none perish that Him trust.<sup>2</sup>

(2) *Faith is also trust in God as a Father.*—If there is a word more expressive of Christian character than any other, it is this one: trust—trust in God. It is the secret source of all peace and serenity. It will comfort and sustain when nothing else can. It gives the child of God the delightful assurance that all his trials are disguised blessings, the appointment of a Father's wisdom, and the infliction of a Father's love. And death itself becomes the security and enlargement of life, a training for that holy intimacy with Himself which is to constitute the blessedness of the heavenly world. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." The bringing of good out of evil is His grand prerogative. He permits the evil in order to produce the good. The Christian's character is formed more from his trials than from his enjoyments. The picture would have no beauty or effect without shade.

¶ Christ's faith in His Father was as conspicuous as His faith in the mission He had to accomplish, of which He said on the cross, "It is finished!" His vindication He left entirely in His Father's hands, when He yielded up His spirit, in a complete surrender of self, saying, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!" I am not forgetting that He was the everlasting

<sup>1</sup> F. W. Robertson, in *Life and Letters*, 335.

<sup>2</sup> "Rabbi" Duncan, in *Memoir of John Duncan*, 414.

Word, the only begotten of the Father, when I speak thus, but I wish to remind you that He really became man—having limited Himself, having “emptied” Himself, as St. Paul said, that He might become the true Brother of humanity, the Son of Man, sharing with us, in everything save sin, the necessity and the blessedness of faith.<sup>1</sup>

¶ The faith of our time has had to pass through fiery furnaces of tribulation. It has survived the shock of losing its Infallible Church. It has survived the shock of losing its Infallible Book. It has surrendered, at the bidding of science, that latest voice of God—the Garden of Eden, and the world made in six days, and the dream of man’s primal innocence. It presumes no longer to penetrate dark mysteries. It cannot reconcile Foreknowledge and Free Will. It cannot reconcile the apparent cruelty of nature with the lovingness of God. It understands neither heaven nor hell. It has learnt to trust, humbly and without reserve, in Christ. “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” That surely is the truest faith of all the ages, to have lived in an atmosphere of unbelief, to have faced and endured all the assaults of modern doubt, and still to trust “in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, as dying, and behold we live, as chastened and not killed”—still, with deeper intensity than ever, to believe in God and Christ and Eternal Life.

I little see, I little know,  
Yet can I fear no ill;  
He who hath guided me till now  
Will be my leader still.

No burden yet was on me laid  
Of trouble or of care,  
But He my trembling step hath stayed,  
And given me strength to bear.

I came not hither of my will  
Or wisdom of mine own:  
That Higher Power upholds me still,  
And still must bear me on.

I knew not of this wondrous earth,  
Nor dreamed what blessings lay  
Beyond the gates of human birth  
To glad my future way.

<sup>1</sup> A. Rowland, *The Exchanged Crowns*, 33.

And what beyond this life may be  
 As little, I divine—  
 What love may wait to welcome me,  
 What fellowships be mine.

I know not what beyond may lie,  
 But look, in humble faith,  
 Into a larger life to die,  
 And find new birth in death.

He will not leave my soul forlorn;  
 I still must find Him true,  
 Whose mercies have been new each morn  
 And every evening new.

Upon His providence I lean,  
 As lean in faith I must:  
 The lesson of my life hath been  
 A heart of grateful trust.

And so my onward way I fare  
 With happy heart and calm,  
 And mingle with my daily care  
 The music of my psalm.<sup>1</sup>

(3) It is enough to name one further aspect of faith: *Faith is spiritual insight*.—This is the way in which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews regards faith. He says it is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." These words impress upon our minds the thought that, corresponding to all the longings which possess the Christian soul, to all the desires and yearnings which spring up within the soul that is earnestly striving to attain to the Christlike and Divine—corresponding to all these are glorious realities; that the upspringing desires shall not be in vain; that the soul which remains steadfast in hope, which clings with brave perseverance to the hopeful yearnings which from time to time unfold themselves to consciousness within its inward recesses, begins by-and-by to feel by anticipation the very substance of what it has hoped for within its grasp, by-and-by attains to the power of seeing before it in mystic vision the glorious spiritual realities, the thoughts of which presented themselves at first only as dimly discerned but irrepressible desires. Faith then is spiritual in-

<sup>1</sup> Frederick Lucian Hosmer.



sight. It has been called the eye of the soul. It is more than this; it is the soul seeing, the soul beholding, the things of heaven; the soul looking upon the things not seen by the bodily eye—looking upon the glories of the spiritual world, upon the wonders of that invisible world which is ever around us, ever underlying the natural world.

¶ By the aid of that mental insight, which, because it is directed towards matters of a scientific import, has been called scientific imagination, men have been able to have within their minds a vivid representation of the marvellous vibratory movements of the mysterious ether, and their rapid transmission in one vast tide of light through the infinite space around us. By the aid of the same power of imagination, that other swiftly-acting vibratory motion which has only in recent times become obedient to man's control, that vibratory motion which enables us with magic speed to send tidings even to countries separated from us by ocean abysses and by wide-spreading continents,—by the aid of the same imaginative power, the mind is able to discern the vibrations of the all-pervading ether with which we associate the term electricity. God who thus endows that part of our inner being which we call the mind with marvellous powers, also endows that which we speak of as the soul—of which the mind is indeed but a faculty—with corresponding powers. Within all souls longing after a fuller knowledge of Divine things God is ever breathing the breath of a diviner life; and as this sacred breath—this Holy Spirit—abides with us to animate us, our enkindled spiritual imaginations discern more and more of the mystic glories of heaven towards which the longings of our souls have been directed. This spiritual imagination which enables us to see as in a vision the substantial realities which the soul has been possessed with longings for; which enables the soul to have a vivid conviction that it has entered upon the life of reconciliation with God, which enables it to discern the transcendent glory of the future life of ever-advancing union with the Divine, which enables it to discern the underlying import of such words as Atonement and Sacrament, to recognize the oneness of the life of the redeemed on earth and in heaven with the great life of God, to behold the unity which binds things seen with things unseen, the correspondence which exists between things natural and things spiritual,—this spiritual imagination which has such potency within us, is the Divine gift of faith which is defined for us in the Epistle to the Hebrews in such suggestive words.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. N. Grimley.



Canst thou discern—beneath all outward seeming,  
 The hidden meaning, oft concealed from sight?  
 The secrets wherewith nature's heart is teeming,  
 The deep soul-vision of a clearer light?

Say, dost thou understand the whisper'd token,  
 The promise breath'd from every leaf and flower?  
 And dost thou hear the word ere it be spoken,  
 And apprehend love's presence by its power?

Canst thou discover in the lives around thee,  
 How small events to mighty issues lead?  
 And does the storm's voice nevermore astound thee,  
 Since every God-sent message thou canst read?

Then, Heaven-gifted thou, to whom is broken  
 Th' eternal revelation, calm and clear—  
 As they to whom, long since the words were spoken,  
 "He that hath ears to hear"—yea, let him hear.<sup>1</sup>

### HOPE.

1. The question occurs to us sometimes, more or less consciously, why hope should be ranked so high, placed on a level with faith and love. We can understand why faith should be so singled out; it is the foundation of the whole structure of religion; it is the bond between the creature and his invisible Maker and God; it is the special title of his acceptance; it is the ground of his self-devotion and obedience, of his highest and noblest ventures. Still more can we understand it of love; for love brings us near, in the essential qualities of character, to Him whom we believe in and worship; love is the faint and distant likeness of Him who so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son to save it; love must last and live and increase, under whatever conditions the regenerate nature exists, the same in substance, however differing in degree, in the humblest penitent on earth and in adoring saint or seraph in the eternal world. But hope is thought of, at first sight, as a self-regarding quality; something which throws forward its desires into the future, and dwells on what it imagines of happiness for itself. And hope, of all things, is delusive and treacherous; it tempts to

<sup>1</sup> Una, *In Life's Garden*, 93.

security and self-deceit; it tempts us to dreams which cannot be realized, which divert us from the necessary and wholesome realities which *do* concern us: it is the mother of half the mistakes, half the fruitless wanderings, half the unhappiness of the world. How comes it that such a quality is placed on a level with faith and love? What need of encouragement to what men are only too ready to do of themselves?

¶ So far from being always considered a virtue, Hope has been stigmatized as a dangerous deceiver or as a luxury not to be indulged in by the weak. "Hope," says the Athenian in Thucydides, "the procuress of peril, cannot indeed destroy, though she may harm, those of her employers who have a reserve to fall back upon: but to those who risk their all upon the issue of her services—and a costly servant she assuredly is—she unmasks herself only in the moment of their ruin, when her victims have no resource left to defend themselves against her recognized treachery." Poets in the same strain cry shame upon this delusive phantom, and protest that they are—

—tired of waiting for this chymick gold,  
Which fools us young, and beggars us when old.

¶ "Hope," says Owen Feltham, "is the bladder a man will take wherewith to learn to swim; then he goes beyond return, and is lost." And Lee,—

Hope is the fawning traitor of the mind,  
Which, while it cozens with a coloured friendship,  
Robs us of our best virtue,—resolution.

¶ The twentieth century is as sad as Marcus Aurelius. Our music is sad. Our poetry—when we get any—is sad. Our drama, when it is serious, is half-morbid. Our greatest writers of fiction are pessimists, and deem a good ending, not only bad art, but false to fact. Our preachers—Heaven pardon them!—seem somehow to have lost fire and hope, and preach as though Christ were indeed in the ship, but asleep. Our philosophy has culminated in the insane ravings against God and man of Nietzsche, or, for the more reverent, in the pathetic Epicureanism of Omar—

One moment in Annihilation's Waste,  
One moment, of the Well of Life to taste,  
The Stars are setting and the Caravan  
Starts for the Dawn of Nothing—oh, make haste.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> W. Hudson Shaw.

2. But it is not really strange that St. Paul should raise hope to a Christian temper of the first order. St. Paul was a student of Scripture and of the history of his people and of religion in the world. And what is on the surface of the Bible is the way in which from first to last it is one unbroken, persistent call to hope—to look from the past and the present to the future. Its contents, we know, are manifold and various; the subjects which it treats are widely different, and it is different in different parts of it in its way of treating them; it is the record of enormous changes, of a great progressive advance in God's dispensations and of man's light and character, of the long and wonderful education of the Law and the Prophets; its story of uninterrupted tendency is strangely chequered in fact; bright and dark succeed one another with the most unexpected turns—lofty faith and the meanest disloyalty, great achievement and unexpected failure, lessons of the purest goodness and most heartfelt devotion with the falls and sins of saints, blessing and chastisement, the patience of God, and the incorrigible provocations of His people. In spite of all that is wonderful and glorious in it, it sounds like the most disastrous and unpromising of stories; and yet that is not its result. For amid the worst and most miserable conditions there is one element which is never allowed to disappear—the strength of a tenacious and unconquerable hope. Hope, never destroyed, however overthrown, never obscured even amid the storm and dust of ruin, is the prominent characteristic of the Old Testament. All leads back to hope, hope of the loftiest and most assured kind, even after the most fatal defeats, of changes which seem beyond remedy. The last word is always hope.

The whole Bible, from first to last, is one unbroken, persistent call to hope. Some of the most wonderful and soul-stirring words of revelation are those in which hope is spoken of. "The God of hope"—"We are saved by hope"—"Jesus Christ who is our hope"—"Christ in you, the hope of glory"—"Begotten again into a living hope"—these are expressions which only familiarity could deprive of their commanding power.

¶ We call St. Paul the Apostle of Faith, and rightly. Equally the great teacher who, in a sudden moment of unique inspiration, recalling what Jesus was when He lived on earth, gave us the 13th chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians,

was the Apostle of Love. But just as truly, perhaps even more emphatically, was St. Paul, above all things else, an Apostle of Hope. It is impossible to mistake it; he was himself the very embodiment of the Christian grace he taught. He never defined it, but his whole life illustrated what he meant. Save in his argumentative passages, it is his characteristic word always when exhorting, trying his hardest to help. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope." "Sorrow not, even as the rest, which have no hope." "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord." That is the note which peals like a trumpet through all the Pauline Epistles.<sup>1</sup>

3. Even the common sense of mankind tells us that life would be but a poor shrunken thing without hope; and even the poet who reviles its "chymick gold," marvels at the fascination which it still imparts to the future in spite of our monotonous and oft-repeated experience of the flat unprofitable past—

Strange cozenage! Who would live past days again?  
Yet all hope pleasure from what still remain.

Surely the common sense of the world is right. While recognizing that hope may be an evil if it makes us careless or indolent, trustful to chance or to luck or to interpositions of Providence rather than to our own energies and skill, we cannot fail to see that hopelessness is a still greater evil, paralysing energy and neutralizing skill. No business in life, however purely intellectual, can dispense with hope as a stimulus to activity. That impulse which the immediate pressure of pleasure or pain gives to irrational animals, hope gives to human beings, who are endowed with the faculty or necessity of looking forward. Who could toil on through threescore years or more in hopelessness? "Work without hope," says Coleridge, "draws nectar in a sieve"; and, indeed, what possibility is there that any human being, however richly endowed with genius, should ever produce the durable results that come from harmonious and continuous effort, or give birth to anything but the perishable expressions

<sup>1</sup> W. Hudson Shaw.

of a mere spasmodic outburst, if he had no durable hope of anything in heaven or earth?

¶ Hope is the minister of strength. When I think of the virtue called Hope two pictures come to my mind. One is the work of a great living painter: it is a piece of symbolism, a gracious, frail, pathetic figure, the eyes blinded with a veil, the head bent and turned on one side with the intentness of a listener to catch the music sounded on the one unbroken chord of her lyre, on which all strings but this are gone. A touchingly beautiful conception; but this is human hope, not Divine. The other picture is the very familiar one which may have met your eye on many a church window—a figure not pathetic, weak, forlorn, but strong and brave as Fortitude; and in her hand not the lyre of broken strings, but the stout shaft and the iron grappling hooks of her mighty anchor; the anchor which entereth into that within the veil, the deeps of the world unseen, and from thence, whatever storm may swing their surface, holds the soul fast.<sup>1</sup>

¶ To the quenchless hope in their souls all the strong heroes of the past, from Leonidas to King Alfred, from Alfred to Hildebrand, from Hildebrand to Cromwell and Lord Chatham and Washington and Mazzini, have owed their power. Without it, Religion, facing the stubborn mass of humanity's sin, is paralysed. To the Christian the shield of faith is no whit more essential than the helmet of hope. Only to men of undying hope, able contagiously to kindle courageousness in their fellows, will the dead weight of the insensate evil of this universe ever yield. There will be no great Day of the Lord until such leaders arise.

Then sound again the golden horn with promise ever new,  
The princely doe will ne'er be caught by those that slack  
pursue,—

Yes! sound again the horn of Hope, the golden horn!

Answer it, flutes and pipes, from valleys still and lorn;

Warders from your high towers, with trumps of silver  
scorn,

And harps in maidens' bowers, with strings from deep  
hearts torn,

All answer to the horn of Hope, the golden horn!

4. Hope elevates and strengthens and inspires. This is why it is one of the great elements of the religious temper; this is why it ranks with faith and love. It is one of the great and necessary

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Skrine, *The Heart's Counsel*, 118.



springs of full religious action. There may be a faith almost without hope; a faith which still believes, though it can see nothing; a faith which refuses to be comforted, which will not let the distant picture of better things rise before it, but yet trusts, even in the darkness, to God's truth and goodness. It is the deep and awful faith of him who said, "Though he slay me yet will I trust in him"; of the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It is the touching and childlike confidence of the prophet—"Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." But the human spirit can hardly stand long the strain of a hopeless faith; one or other of the elements will assert its supremacy. And hope is the energy and effort of faith; the strong self-awakening from the spells of discouragement and listlessness and despair.

What gives its moral value to hope, what makes it a virtue and a duty, is that in its higher forms it is a real act and striving of the will and the moral nature; and if any one thinks that this is an easy process he has yet much to learn of the secrets of his own heart. It is an act, often a difficult act, of choice and will, like the highest forms of courage. It is a refusal to be borne down and cowed and depressed by evil; a refusal, because it is not right, to indulge in the melancholy pleasure, no unreal one, of looking on the dark side of things. It is so that hope plays so great a part in the spiritual life; that it fights with such power on the side of God.

¶ Millions of men are digging and toiling twelve hours each day; and God hath sent forth hope to emancipate them from drudgery. The man digging with his pick hath a far-away look as he toils. Hope is drawing pictures of a cottage with vines over the doorway, with some one standing at the gate, a sweet voice singing over the cradle. Hope makes this home his; it rests the labourer and saves him from despair. Multitudes working the stithy and deep mines sweeten their labour and exalt their toil by aspiring thoughts. Thinking of his little ones at home, the miner says: "My children shall not be as their father was; my drudgery is not for self, but for love's sake;



the sweat of my brow is oil in the lamp of love; I will light it to-night on the sacred altar of home." Here is the secret of the rise and reign of the people. This explains all man's progress in knowledge and culture. As the fruits and flowers rise rank upon rank in response to the advancing summer, so all that is most refined and exalted in man's mind or heart bursts forth in new ideals, reforms, revolutions, in response to the revelation of that personal presence from whom all hope and aspiration incessantly proceed.<sup>1</sup>

5. What is the use, it is asked, of bidding us hope without giving us first some certain or probable reality to hope about? The faculty of hope is like the faculty of reason so far as this, that both must have some foundation of facts whereon to work. Give us a permanent and reasonable object of hope and we shall be only too glad to hope; but without such an object we must be content to be hopeless. We cannot allow ourselves to be fooled, even though the fooling may lead us along a path of happiness. Better the hopeless path of truth than the fool's paradise of comfortable delusions.

(1) The whole universe, when illuminated by the light that streams upon it from the Cross of Christ, furnishes us with a durable object of hope in the Fatherhood of the Maker of the world, who, in the course of many ages, is conforming man to the Divine image. The hope of the ultimate perfection of all things, based upon the sense of the Divine Fatherhood, is the source of all healthy activity in men. In the strength of this hope we can look all evil in the face without blenching, and beneath the abyss of sin discern the vaster abyss of the Divine love.

(2) But what shall we say to those who tell us that about the future we may reason but have no right to hope? Our reply will be that we cannot reason about the future without taking into account the evidence that the world was made by a good and wise Being who has given us many faculties tending to happiness and righteousness, which faculties He cannot have intended to fust in us unused; and among the highest of these faculties stands hope. Furthermore we may point out that healthy natural hope, though it may work through illusions, does not

<sup>1</sup> N. D. Hillis, *The Investment of Influence*, 285.

delude. There is no deception in the Divine Providence which leads the human soul from the cradle to the grave under the guidance of unfulfilled hopes. Hope, like faith, may be literally, but it is not spiritually, deceptive: the spirits of heaven are not like the fiends—

That palter with us in a double sense,  
That keep the word of promise to our ear  
And break it to our hope.

Of the word of God's promises we may assert the direct opposite. That word is never "kept to our ear" and never "broken to our hope." Just as the faith or trust of the child in the father (who to him is as a God) is not a delusion but a truth enwrapped in illusion, so it is with the natural hopes of childhood and of every age; with the aspirations of a generous youth and the ambitions of a virtuous man. These neither "fool us when young" nor "beggar us when old"; but, on the contrary, each bright cloud of hope, breaking as the traveller is allured onward by it from one stage to another in his lifelong upward journey, reveals a brighter cloud within, to break in its turn and to disclose a still brighter interior splendour, till at last those heights are reached where all clouds shall vanish away, and the mind shall be prepared to receive the direct rays of the Sun of righteousness.

¶ The characteristic of waning life is said to be disenchantment. Old men in general are inclined to check the zeal and damp the ardour of their younger followers. A shrewd observer of life has said that youth is an illusion, manhood a struggle, old age a regret. "How many young men," says a great idealist, "have I not hailed at the commencement of their career, glowing with enthusiasm, and full of the poetry of great enterprises, whom I see to-day precocious old men, with the wrinkles of cold calculation on their brow; calling themselves free from illusion when they are only disheartened; and practical when they are only commonplace." But believing men experience no disillusionment. The leaves of hope never wither on souls that are rooted in God. Joseph when dying looks forward with calm and perfect confidence, knowing that glorious things, and ever more glorious, must be, because God is. "What is this Better, this flying Ideal, but the perpetual promise of the Creator?" God lives though a hundred Josephs die. The two characteristics of the Hebrew mind were the upward and the forward look, the one directed to God in the present,

the other to His coming in increasing power and grace in the future. Optimism was the distinction of the Hebrews. "In the absence of Hope and of an ideal of progress, we strike upon one great difference between the classical Greeks and the Hebrews." Among the ancient races the Hebrew was like a watcher standing on a high mountain top, scanning the horizon and catching the first beams of coming day, while others were still hidden in darkness. The very heart-cry of the Hebrew race is heard in such words as these—

My soul looketh for the Lord  
More than watchmen look for the morning;  
Yea, more than watchmen for the morning.<sup>1</sup>

6. Our hope is for others and for ourselves.

(1) It is for *ourselves here and now*.—There must often be much to distress and alarm us in the course of things which interest us now—evils which seem without remedy, defeats which seem final, perplexities through which we cannot see our way, dark and gloomy clouds rising in menace over our familiar world. To hope seems to us then like deluding ourselves; we call it optimism, and instinctive dislike to pain, a determination not to see the cruel truth. And yet how often has it appeared in the upshot of things that if in the darkest times any had been bold enough to hope he would have been amply justified?

What must have been the feelings of Christians in the fourth and fifth centuries, when, just as Christianity seemed to have won its way into the Roman Empire, they saw the fierce northern barbarians break into it, and the heathen triumph over religion and civil order? Which would then have seemed the judgment of sober good sense—the despondency which saw only the frightful mischief, or the bold hope which saw in the barbarians the seed of a great Christendom? Yet, who would have been right and who wrong?

"It has come," wrote the soberest and also the loftiest of Christian thinkers in the last century, "I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry; but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious." The ominous symptom has certainly not grown less ominous; but could even the calm and large mind

<sup>1</sup> J. Strachan, *Hebrew Ideals*, ii. 165.

of Bishop Butler have embraced the thought that with this, not diminished, perhaps aggravated, there might also come a steady growth of energy and fervour and deepening practical purpose in the Church and religious men, such as he had certainly not seen, and could not look for?

¶ Hope about ourselves should be encouraged. It is no proof of devoutness to be always shedding penitential tears, or to be so sensible of our own weaknesses as to be despondent about our future. Victory is generally the guerdon of those who expect it, confident in the rightness of their cause, and the help of omnipotence on the side of right. When King Ramirez, in the year 909, vowed to deliver Castile from the shameful tribute imposed by the Moors of one hundred virgins delivered annually, he collected his troops and openly defied their King Abdelraman.

The king called God to witness, that come there weal or woe, Thenceforth no maiden tribute from out Castile should go,—  
 “At least I will do battle on God our Saviour’s foe,  
 And die beneath my banner before I see it so.”

He fought with courage but without hope of victory, and after a furious conflict was defeated on the plain of Clavijo. But that night (the legend says), while he was sleeping, St. Jago appeared to him in vision, and promised him the victory. Next morning he called his officers about him, and told them his dream; inspired them also with hope of heavenly aid; and that day the enemy was overwhelmed by the Christian warriors, and ever since the war-cry of Spain has been “Santiago.”<sup>1</sup>

¶ The worst of all the woes that trouble faithful hearts is despair of ever conquering our sins, of ever becoming what the Lord Christ would have us be. The modern man, Sir Oliver Lodge tells us, is not troubling much about his sins. I do not know about that. This I am sure of, that earnest Christians trouble about nothing so much. While we are young, while we are yet in the glad spring-time, the hope of victory is ever present. When we have entered upon the dull, dusty paths of middle age, there comes a horrible weariness of the conflict. Disappointment, disillusionment of ourselves, drag us down. Like the Celtic race, we are always setting forth to the war, always to return vanquished. Year by year our hearts grow harder and seem to ossify. The old sins we loathe are with us still; new sins that we never dreamt of assault us. Character seems not to advance, but to retrograde, and the enthusiastic impulses of youth have fled.

<sup>1</sup> A. Rowland.

What shall save us now, in the second critical period of life, but the grace of Christian hope, which is not temperament, is not human quality at all, but a blessed boon from God? By that gladdening spirit alone shall despair be quelled, demons exorcized, the old energy of youth recovered, the battle renewed.<sup>1</sup>

¶ Nowhere, perhaps, is Hope in relation to *one's own future* more beautifully illustrated than in the noontide scene in *Pippa Passes*. Phene, a Greek girl, has become the wife of Jules, a French sculptor. The union is the result of a cruel joke practised upon him by some students who owed him a grudge; and the sculptor finds, when it is too late, that the refined woman by whom he fancied himself loved is but an ignorant girl of the lowest class, of whom also his enemies have made a tool. Her remorse at seeing what man she had deceived disarms his anger, and marks the dawning of a moral sense in her. And this is what she says—

You creature with the eyes!  
 If I could look for ever up to them,  
 As now you let me,—I believe, all sin,  
 All memory of wrong done, suffering borne,  
 Would drop down, low and lower, to the earth  
 Whence all that's low comes, and there touch and stay  
 —Never to overtake the rest of me.  
 All that, unspotted, reaches up to you,  
 Drawn by those eyes! What rises is myself,  
 Not me the shame and suffering; but they sink,  
 Are left, I rise above them. Keep me so,  
 Above the world!

Both he and she are saved.<sup>2</sup>

(2) It is for *ourselves in the hereafter*.—For it is simply the most literal fact that God has set before us, in another state of being, the most wonderful future, which is within the certain reach of every single one of us: as much, as certainly, within our reach, as anything that we know of, which we could obtain to-morrow. This is the plain, clear, certain promise, without which Christianity is a dream and a delusion. The life and destiny of each individual man runs up to this; this is what he was made for; for this he has been taught, and has received God's grace, and has been tried, and has played his part in the years of time.

<sup>1</sup> W. Hudson Shaw.

<sup>2</sup> J. Flew, *Studies in Browning*, 119.



It is the barest of commonplaces; and yet to any one who has tried to open his mind to its reality and certainty, it must have come with a strange and overpowering force—new on every fresh occasion, like nothing else in the world. For it is one thing to look forward to some great general event, the triumph of the saints of God, the final glory of the great company of the redeemed; one thing to look at all this from the outside, as a spectator by the power of imagination and thought. It is quite another, when it comes into your mind that you yourself in the far-off ages, you yourself, the very person now on earth, are intended to have your place—your certain and definite place—in all that triumph, in all that blessedness, in all that glory; and yet surely, to any one that will, this is the prospect; this, and nothing less.

Just come from heaven, how bright and fair  
 The soft locks of the baby's hair,  
 As if the unshut gates still shed  
 The shining halo round his head!

Just entering heaven, what sacred snows  
 Upon the old man's brow repose!  
 For there the opening gates have strown  
 The glory from the great white throne.<sup>1</sup>

(3) It is *for others*.—That ye may abound in hope, says St. Paul,—hope for ourselves, hope for our neighbour, hope for the world. Be the sin of our heart what it may, and seventy times seven the falls of the past, in Christ we know that sin shall have no more dominion over us. Be the sin of our neighbour what it may, love hopeth all things, and without love we are nothing. Be the sin of the world what it may, we know who came to take it away. His arm is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither is His ear heavy, that it cannot hear the great and bitter cry that cometh up from earth to heaven. We may give up hope when the Saviour of the world confesses Himself defeated, and all-ruling Love retires for ever baffled from the battlefield of human wickedness: but until then Christ calls us to set our hope on Him, and to bear witness of it to the world.

<sup>1</sup> Harriet Prescott Spofford.



¶ In the England of John Wesley, numbers of men were his peers in faith. Butler, Toplady, Romaine, John Newton, had as firm a grip on what faith can reach as he, and said words as noble for it. But Wesley had more *hopefulness* in his little finger than any other man of them had in his whole body. And so it was, that, wherever Wesley went, men caught the contagion of his great hope, and then ran tirelessly as long as they lived, kindling over all the world. Macaulay does well to say that no man can write a history of England in the last century, who shall fail to take into account Wesley's vast influence in the common English life.<sup>1</sup>

¶ It is to be regretted that Edna Lyall's religious stories are being neglected. They are full, not only of artistic power, but likewise of rich Christian instruction. In one she describes one of her characters in this significant fashion: "Carlo had the rare and enviable gift of seeing people *as they might have been* under happier circumstances, and the still rarer gift of treating them as such." The life of Christ was full of this enviable hopefulness. Read how He dealt with sinners, and you will rejoice to find that His compassion dwelt upon them *in their sin*.<sup>2</sup>

¶ Dr. Westcott has told us—what those who are acquainted with the poet's works will recognize as a statement of fact—that Browning "has dared to look on the darkest and meanest forms of action and passion, from which we commonly and rightly turn our eyes, and he has brought back for us, from this universal survey, a conviction of hope." As a single specimen of this, we may refer to the scene described in the brief poem bearing the title, "Apparent Failure." It is a picture of the Morgue in Paris, into which the poet entered to gaze upon the ghastly spectacles that there presented themselves—the bodies of men who hated life, or whose ideals were shattered, or whose hearts were broken. And, after plucking up courage to look fearlessly upon them all, trying to conceive what such a sight represented, *how* each victim came to meet with his terrible fate, he sums up his reflections thus—

My own hope is, a sun will pierce  
The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;  
That, after Last, returns the First,  
Though a wide compass round be fetched;  
That what began best, can't end worst,  
Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. Collyer, *The Life That Now Is*, 68.

<sup>2</sup> J. A. Clapperton, *Culture of the Christian Heart*, 117.

<sup>3</sup> J. Flew, *Studies in Browning*, 121.

## LOVE.

1. Now consider the greatest of the three—charity or Christian love. It is no use studying Greek or Latin to find out what Christian love is. The dictionaries to consult here are our own hearts in relation to our nearest and dearest, the thirteenth chapter of Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, and St. John's pregnant phrase, "God is love." Christian love is the feeling begotten in our hearts towards God and towards our fellow-men by the penetration into our hearts of the sense of the love of God to us when He gave His Son to die for us. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins . . . we love, because he first loved us." That is at once the natural and the supernatural history of Christian love.

¶ Nothing suggests better what Christian love is than Giotto's drawing of "Charity" in Padua. It is a corrective to all that misconception of love which left room for such a phrase as "cold as charity." This is how Ruskin describes the drawing. "Usually Charity is nursing children or giving money. Giotto thinks there is little charity in nursing children; bears and wolves do that for their little ones; and less still in giving money. His Charity stands trampling upon bags of gold—has no use for them. She gives only corn and flowers (with her right hand); and God's angel (to whom she looks) gives her, not even these—but a Heart."<sup>1</sup>

¶ The great religions of the world are distinguishable from each other by some supreme characteristic. Thus, the genius of Hinduism is mysticism, that of Buddhism is asceticism, that of Parseeism is dualism, that of Mohammedanism is fanaticism, that of Confucianism is secularism,—and that of our own faith is altruism, or love. No other inference than this is possible from the teachings of the New Testament. There God is represented as sending His Son to the earth because He loved, and He in this way "commends" His love; and then St. John, seeking to sum up His nature in a single word, exclaims: "God is love!"<sup>2</sup>

2. Note three things in the very conception of love.

(1) *It is a personal relation.*—The word may, indeed, be used loosely of our mere liking for inanimate or impersonal objects;

<sup>1</sup> R. J. Drummond, *Faith's Certainties*, 240.

<sup>2</sup> G. C. Lorimer, *The Modern Crisis in Religion*, 233.

it may be degraded to express an animal passion. But all such uses of the word are either abuses of its meaning or are figurative. As the modern poet of chivalry has exquisitely expressed it: "True love's the gift which God has given to man alone beneath the heaven;" it is "the tie, which heart to heart, and mind to mind, in body and in soul can bind." The discriminating genius of the Greek language has marked the absolute difference of this love from the lower forms of passion by assigning special words to each; and there are some who have regretted that no similar distinction has been maintained in our own language. But, we may perhaps be permitted to think, there is another point of view from which the absence of any such verbal distinction may appear prompted by a true instinct in a Christian nation. It was necessary for a Greek to recognize sensual passion as one form of human relationship. But the Christian best expresses the lofty ideal which is ever before his eyes, and best exemplifies that charity which thinketh no evil and which believeth all things, by refusing to contemplate men and women as united by any lower tie than that of love, or by refusing to contemplate our lower nature except in the light shed upon it by the higher.

(2) *Love is the highest relation which one personal being can assume towards another.*—It seems necessary to insist upon this characteristic in it, because its true nature is often obscured by its association with mere abstractions. It is not with humanity but with human beings that love is concerned; and such mere intellectual abstractions are useful only so far as they assist us in placing ourselves in that individual relation to individuals in which love finds its existence and its sphere of action. That which the Apostle has in view in his glowing description of this virtue is not a vague emotion of the heart, but the self-sacrifice, the devotion, the patience which are evoked in one soul by the presence of another.

¶ The degree in which this gracious virtue of love can be evoked in our nature must depend upon the personal relations in which we are placed. The relation, perhaps, may be sometimes and in some measure an ideal one; but the vision of a person must be brought before the soul, if its highest faculties are to be aroused and its noblest emotions drawn forth. We all know, and it is the privilege of a generous youth to feel with peculiar vividness, what an ennobling effect is produced upon our

nature by love, in the true sense of the word, thus aroused towards a kindred soul; while we also know and feel how intimately and essentially this influence is dependent on the personal character of the relation. It was the favourite theme of our greatest poets in the most splendid period of our literature, and perhaps of our national life; and in Spenser's lofty verse the vision of love and beauty, and the vision of heavenly love and beauty, are so closely associated that they seem to merge into one another. But poets of less spiritual flight, and more concerned with the ordinary passions of human nature, have similarly depicted their heroes as rising to their noblest heights under the inspiration of this generous passion. When St. Paul discerns in the true relation of husband and wife a picture of the relation of Christ to His Church, he justifies and sanctifies these transcripts from nature, and welds together in essential union the most human and the most Divine aspect of love. Where, indeed, even in the light of the Gospel, shall be found more touching illustrations of some of the excellencies which the Apostle ascribes to charity, than in the personal affections of a gracious family life? The love which suffers long and is kind, which envies not, which seeks not her own, which is not easily provoked, which thinks no evil, which bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things,—is not this the love of mothers and of wives, the devotion of true sons and husbands? What an astonishing power there is in such love and such devotion to suppress the selfishness in a man or a woman, and to arouse all the faculties of our nature in the service of the person to whom we are devoted!<sup>1</sup>

(3) *It needs a perfect Person to satisfy its desires.*—For the question arises, whether all these stirrings of heart towards men like ourselves, all these quickenings of the moral and spiritual pulse can be more than the first awakenings of the human soul towards its true destiny—that of communion and union with a perfect Person. With respect to all these emotions, even the truest and most beautiful, when viewed independently of higher relations, in how lamentable a degree is illusion blended with them! Those illusions are often the mockery, the cruel and unworthy mockery, of maturer years; and they are not less often the bitter disappointments of tender and faithful hearts. But suppose a love open to human nature which should be subject to no such illusion; imagine a Person revealed to men and women

<sup>1</sup> Dean Wace.

on whom they could lavish the inexhaustible stores of their affection, their admiration, their devotion, and be sure that all, and more than all, would fall short of what was due, and be a feeble response to the infinite reality: and what might not then be expected to be the influence produced upon our nature? We have the answer in this chapter, which was, in fact, the response elicited from the soul of St. Paul by the vision of the Lord Jesus Christ, by the love of the Saviour for him and his responsive love for the Saviour.

¶ Perfection, or at least blessedness, in some form or other, has been proved by experience to be the ineradicable desire of the soul of man. That desire may, indeed, be dulled for a time, or chilled by despair. But such an acquiescence in imperfection brings with it, like the [disappointed philosophy of the ancient world, a decay of energy, an abandonment of hope, in every sphere of life, and relaxes the spring of all noble thoughts and emotions. "Be ye perfect" is a command which is implied in all others, and is one of their main animating motives; and, in offering the means for this perfection, the Gospel possesses one of its deepest claims upon our spirits.<sup>1</sup>

Gather us in, Thou Love that fillest all,  
Gather our rival faiths within Thy fold,  
Rend each man's temple veil and bid it fall,  
That we may know that Thou hast been of old;  
Gather us in.

Gather us in: we worship only Thee;  
In varied names we stretch a common hand  
In diverse forms a common soul we see;  
In many ships we seek one spirit-land;  
Gather us in.

Each sees one colour of Thy rainbow light;  
Each looks upon one tint and calls it heaven  
Thou art the fulness of our partial sight,  
We are not perfect till we find the seven;  
Gather us in.

3. To whom, then, is our love directed?

(1) *It is love to God in Christ.*—The immediate and supreme object of love is the ever-blessed God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all

<sup>1</sup> Dean Wace.



thy strength, and with all thy mind." This is the first commandment. And with God as the centre of the heart, all the faculties and all the powers have unbounded scope for their operation.

¶ I spoke to H—— about the worship of the Virgin, and he thought one reason for its prevalence is, that it puts before men the more affectionate side of truth; and he deplored the want of a more large appeal to the affections in Protestantism, saying that we worship Christ, but none of us love Him. I was silent, but the result of a scrutiny into my own mind was that, with an exception, I scarcely love any one, or anything else, and that not because of any reference to His love for me, which somehow or other never enters into my mind, but solely in consequence of what He is and was, according, at least, to my conception of Him and His mind and heart. I do not know that this consciousness pleased me, because it presented itself rather as a deficiency than as a power—a lack of human sympathy, the existence of a continually increasing number of repellent poles in my constitution, which isolate me from my species, and make my antipathies more marked than my sympathies. Whereas St. John's conception of genuine love for Him was that of an affection trained in love for beings who exhibit the same Humanity which was in Him, in weaker images, in the various relationships of life. "If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Through the visible as a school we rise up to the appreciation of the invisible. Now my nature forces me to reverse the order, or rather to skip the first steps, for I certainly have some sympathy—dreamy, perhaps useless—with the invisible—invisible personality, justice, right; but there they end, and almost never go on, or go back, to the visible and human. Those lines you have often quoted, of Burns—

I saw thee eye the general weal  
With boundless love—

express a feeling which I can only imagine, not realize, except by a sort of analogy which is dreamy.<sup>1</sup>

¶ The very blessed in Paradise, beholding the infinite Beauty of God, would faint and fail from longing to love Him more if His most Holy Will did not fill them with His own sweet Rest. But they love His sovereign Will so entirely that theirs is wholly merged in it, and they rest content in His Content, willing to submit to the limit Love puts to love. Were it not so, their love would be alike delicious and poignant—delicious in the possession

<sup>1</sup> F. W. Robertson, in *Life and Letters*, 341.



of so great a gift, poignant in the intensity of desire for more. Thus God in His Wisdom sends perpetual shafts into the hearts of those who love Him, to teach them that they do not love Him nearly so much as He deserves to be loved. And be sure that the man who does not crave to love God more does not as yet love Him well enough. There is no "enough"; and he who would stop short in what he has attained, has attained but little, be sure.<sup>1</sup>

(2) *It is love to man.*—We cannot love God without loving man. The love of God is the love of man expanded and purified. To love man is to love God. The testimony of St. John, the disciple of love, is decisive on this point. *His* love to God was unearthly, pure, spiritual; his religion had melted into love, and here is his account: "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" According to him, it is through the visible that we appreciate the invisible, through the love of our brother that we grow into the love of God. At the same time, true love for man must flow primarily from love to God. The love of God is the root, the love of man the fruit; the love of God is the fountain, the love of man is the stream in which it flows. Both are parts of one whole, links of one chain, threads of one cord which binds us to God, descending from Him to us, and lifting us up to His very being, which is love.<sup>2</sup>

¶ I read the other day of a girl, a convert from heathenism in the Sandwich Islands, where Father Damien lived. She had a class of little children, and she wished to know which of them continued heathen and which had accepted Christianity. In her simplicity, uncontaminated by conventionalities and traditions which mislead us, she said to each child in her class, "Do you love your enemies?" If the child answered, "Yes," the unsophisticated teacher said, "Then you are a Christian; stand here." If the child answered, "No," she said, with equal decision, "Then you are a heathen; stand on the other side." Thus did the girl in the Sandwich Islands divide the sheep from the goats; and thus will her Saviour divide them on the last day.<sup>3</sup>

¶ The Teacher earnestly desired to return to his post. I pled with him to remain at the Mission House till we felt more assured, but he replied,—“Missi, when I see them thirsting for my blood,

<sup>1</sup> St. Francis de Sales.

<sup>2</sup> J. Davies.

<sup>3</sup> H. P. Hughes, *The Philanthropy of God*, 40.

I just see myself when the Missionary first came to my island. I desired to murder him, as they now desire to kill me. Had he stayed away for such danger, I would have remained Heathen; but he came, and continued coming to teach us, till, by the grace of God, I was changed to what I am. Now the same God that changed me to this can change these poor Tannese to love and serve Him. I cannot stay away from them; but I will sleep at the Mission House, and do all I can by day to bring them to Jesus."<sup>1</sup>

¶ Have we got this love? Have we got it as a city, as a Church, and as individuals? Have we got it as a city? I suppose that many would answer that by an eulogium upon the charity of London. We should have flowing articles upon the generosity with which we support our hospitals and our asylums and our refuges. But I have during this last week come across certain facts which I feel it my duty to place before you this afternoon. As the Bishop of East London, it is, I think, natural that, considering for a thousand years the head of every hospital in Europe was Bishop of the place, the Bishop of East London should take a great interest in East London hospitals. I took first the London Hospital, that lifeboat, as it were, which goes up and down the sea of suffering humanity in East London, to cure it and to save it. I thought that the charity of London would, at any rate, be sufficient to support a great institution like the London Hospital. What do I find? I find that the love of London has allowed a deficit of £30,000 in the last two years; that so cramped are they that they have to build, and yet have no money to build with; and that to carry on their work efficiently at all they want £10,000 a year more. I pass to the Victoria Park Consumptive Hospital, and I pass with the memory of having seen at least fifty of my East-end friends die of consumption before my eyes in the last nine years. I go to the Consumptive Hospital, and what do I find? Out of 162 beds only 60 can be used for lack of funds. One hundred and two patients are passed as suitable, and yet of those 102 none can be taken in. Four women, passed a few weeks ago, have all died before their time to go in came. Those 102 beds are left vacant because the love of London is not sufficient for the purpose. I go to the Children's Hospital. One would have thought that the charity of a great city would look after its children. But what do I find at the North-Eastern Hospital for children? I find the Hospital crammed with children, and another wing an urgent necessity, and yet the only £2000 which has been given was not given by

<sup>1</sup> *John G. Paton*, i. 195.

some one who hates creeds and who goes in for the service of man without creeds, but was obtained from a distinctly Church charity as the first contribution to the new wing. I say, then, that as a city we have not risen yet to the true standard of love. Have we as a Church? <sup>1</sup>

“ O happy souls, O radiant souls, what songs are ye out-pouring?

What passionate, pure prayers are these from earth to heaven soaring?

What mystic gifts of love and grace are these your words imploring

From God, for your neighbour and your enemy?”

Our souls are all afire with love—with love our hearts are glowing,

The mystic peace that Jesus gives our joyous strains are showing;

For lo! our love can not be hid—our brimming love out-flowing

To God, and our neighbour and our enemy.

“ But what of those who sought your harm—who joyed at your mistaking,

What place have they in this your chant—in these your prayers, partaking?

Are your pure souls—your tender hearts—with love and longing breaking

For God, and your neighbour and your enemy?”

Our souls are filled with heavenly peace—our hearts with love untiring,

And Jesus with His radiant love our feeble love is firing,

Till nought we crave but love for all, in this our joyous choiring

From God, for our neighbour and our enemy.<sup>2</sup>

(3) *It is love to the brethren.*—The love of the brethren is often referred to as distinguished from love; the one having reference to moral character, the other to the race in general. “Be kindly affectioned one to another.” “Be ye all of one mind, . . . love as brethren.”

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Winnington Ingram, *Banners of the Christian Faith*, 43.

<sup>2</sup> Margaret Blaikie, *Songs by the Way*, 54.

¶ Gibbon has discussed the reason of the wonderful expansion of Christianity at the outset of its career, and he has alleged five causes: the zeal of the primitive Christians, their doctrine of immortality, the miraculous powers of the Apostolic Church, her pure morality, and the union and discipline of the Christian republic. And these, no doubt, were efficient causes, but Gibbon has overlooked the strongest of all. The reason why Christianity spread over the world and won the nations, was that the Christians understood the blessed secret of love as the Lord had taught it. It is said by Tertullian that in those early days the heathen would often exclaim: "See how they love one another!" All this changed, and during the days of bitter controversy over the doctrine of the Person of Christ, when the Christians were wrangling and excommunicating and persecuting one another, it was said by a Latin historian that their hatred of each other exceeded the fury of savage beasts against mankind. It was then that Christianity lost its power, and if we would recover the ancient power, we must rediscover and practise the ancient secret.<sup>1</sup>

¶ In Samoa, Stevenson had left his small hut and removed into a large house. There had not yet been time for Love to line it. Stevenson felt sad and weary, and had forgotten to bespeak his nightly coffee and cigars. Whilst he was thinking, the door quietly opened and the native boy entered carrying the tray with that on it for which he longed. Stevenson said in the native tongue, "Great is your forethought." The boy corrected him and said, "Great is the love."<sup>2</sup>

¶ The writer remembers a curious expression used by a Mohammedan who had become a Christian and then relapsed, "Un ki muhabbat dekhke, bhul gaya; un ki dushmani dekhke, yad aya," "Their (the Christians') love made me forget my religion; their hostility made me remember it."<sup>3</sup>

4. But God in Christ is the *source* as well as the object of love. Where are we to look for the inspiration that breathed into the idea of "love" that intense spirituality—that perfect purity and almost infinite longing and desire, which demanded almost a new word to meet a new conception, as much in advance of all that the heathen world knew as the Gospel of St. John transcends all the Greek philosophies? The answer to this question is to be found, at least in the first instance, in the words of our Lord

<sup>1</sup> D. Smith.

<sup>2</sup> A. R. Simpson, *These Three*, 47.

<sup>3</sup> C. Field, *The Charm of India*, xi.

Jesus Christ Himself, as reported to us in that very Gospel—the spiritual Gospel, as it has been well called—of the beloved Apostle; to the effect that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”

So kindly was His love to us,  
    (We had not heard of love before),  
That all our life grew glorious  
    When He had halted at our door.

So meekly did He love us men,  
    Though blind we were with shameful sin,  
He touched our eyes with tears, and then  
    Led God's tall angels flaming in.

He dwelt with us a little space,  
    As mothers do in childhood's years,  
And still we can discern His face  
    Wherever Joy or Love appears.

He made our virtues all His own,  
    And lent them grace we could not give,  
And now our world seems His alone,  
    And while we live He seems to live.

He took our sorrows and our pain,  
    And hid their torture in His breast,  
Till we received them back again,  
    To find on each His grief impressed.

He clasped our children in His arms,  
    And showed us where their beauty shone,  
He took from us our grey alarms,  
    And put Death's icy armour on.

So gentle were His ways with us,  
    That crippled souls had ceased to sigh,  
On them He laid His hands, and thus  
    They gloried at His passing by.

Without reproof or word of blame,  
    As mothers do in childhood's years,  
He kissed our lips in spite of shame,  
    And stayed the passage of our tears.



So tender was His love to us,  
 (We had not learned to love before),  
 That we grew like to Him, and thus  
 Men sought His grace in us once more.<sup>1</sup>

¶ When the Jubilee Singers first visited our shores in 1873, an old believer used to repeat constantly the refrain of one of their songs, "Free grace and dying love." The love of Christ constrained her. "Rabbi" Duncan rose up from the Professor's chair, and walked up and down the platform as he discoursed on the Crucifixion with his students. "Ay, ay, d'ye know what it was—dying on the cross, forsaken by His Father—d'ye know what it was? What? What? It was damnation—and damnation taken lovingly." The love of Christ constrained him.<sup>2</sup>

It was for me that Jesus died, for me and a world of men  
 Just as sinful, and just as slow to give back His love again;  
 And He didn't wait till I came to Him, but He loved me at  
 my worst;  
 He needn't ever have died for me if I could have loved Him  
 first.<sup>3</sup>

### THESE THREE.

We have looked at Faith, Hope, and Love separately. Now let us see them acting and re-acting the one on the other.

"Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three." In thus speaking of these cardinal virtues of the Christian character, it is evident that St. Paul means to distinguish them from one another. He speaks of them as "these three," and thereby represents them to us as three several virtues, each holding its own place, and serving its own purpose, to which it is peculiarly adapted, and in which the others are incapable of superseding it. Each one of that blessed triad of Christian graces has its own proper province in the spiritual life allotted to it. And each has important functions to discharge, which none but itself is capable of executing. Faith can be no substitute for love in the way of fulfilling the great duties of practical religion. And as little can love be any substitute for faith in the way of appropriating the merits of the Saviour, and thereby securing our justification in the sight of God. What St. Paul has elsewhere said of the

<sup>1</sup> Coningsby William Dawson.

<sup>2</sup> A. R. Simpson, *These Three*, 45.

<sup>3</sup> Dora Greenwell.



several offices in the Christian Church is equally applicable to the leading graces of the Christian character—that all of them are useful and needful in their respective spheres, like the various organs and members of the human body; and that no one among them can set aside another any more than the hand can dispense with the services of the foot, or the eye undertake to perform the functions of the ear.

But while in this statement faith, hope, and love are thus represented as numerically distinct, they are notwithstanding very intimately associated, as having the closest mutual affinity and dependence. All three must abide together, in order to the perfection of each other, as well as of the whole character into which they enter. God has joined them; and man must not attempt to sever them. Faith must animate the mind with hope, and “work by love,” in order to show its genuineness as that living and operative faith of which alone the Scriptures have approved. Hope, if it do not rest on the good foundation which faith has laid for it, is altogether visionary and unwarranted; and if it do not elevate the soul unto the unfeigned love of God and man, it is spurious or hypocritical. And love, if it be not originated by faith and sustained by hope, is merely an instinctive impulse of nature, accidental in its attachments, and limited to the sphere of visible things, and thus differing most essentially from that evangelical love of which it is written, that “the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.”

1. *Faith and Hope*.—Faith and hope are twin sisters, and hardly to be known apart; both as beautiful as they can be, and alike beautiful, and very often indeed mistaken each for the other. Yet this need never be; because between them there is this clear difference, that while hope expects, faith inspects; while hope is like Mary, looking *up-ward*, faith is like Martha, looking *at-ward*; while the light in the eyes of hope is high, the light in the eyes of faith is strong; while hope trembles in expectation, faith is quiet in possession. Hope leaps out toward what will be: faith holds on to what is; hope idealizes, faith realizes; faith sees, hope foresees.

¶ The trouble with some men is, that, while they hold on to

the faith, they have lost hold of the hope of their religion. And so they inspect but they do not expect; they believe in what has come, but not in what is coming. So they expire after they have ceased to inspire; they die, but they do *not* make many live. You get a grand lesson on this matter, as you go from the mouth to the springs of the Rhine. Passing through the fog and mist of Holland, as through a stagnant, grassy sea, you stretch upward, league after league; and, as you go, the country gradually changes. The air grows clearer, the prospect finer; everything that can stir the soul begins to reach down toward you, and touch you with its glory. But the higher you go, the harder is your going; only the deepening beauty never fails you. So at last you come into Switzerland, where the blue heavens bend over you with their infinite, tender light; and the mountains stand about you, in their white robes, glorious as the gates of heaven, with green valleys nestling between, which, but for sorrow and sin, are beautiful as Paradise. And all about you is a vaster vision, and within you an intenser inspiration than can ever be felt on the foggy flats below. It is the difference between faith alone, and faith and hope together.<sup>1</sup>

¶ By faith Jacob, when a-dying, leaves his children a legacy of hope in God. He looks upward in faith and forward in expectancy. His religion makes him sanguine and prophetic. "Behold," he said, "I die: but God shall be with you" (Gen. xlviii. 21). The words are suggestive of infinite possibilities. The One remains while the many change and pass. When man dies, God lives on, and faith in the real presence of a living God is the spring of eternal hope. Faith is the power by which men grasp the future, the unseen, the Divine, by which they maintain their expectant look, by which they remain optimists in spite of all the evil of the world. Dying saints are enabled to bequeath messages of comfort to after ages, because they are sure that the God who has so greatly blessed themselves has greater blessings in store for their posterity. True religion bids them expect a brighter day to dawn and a happier society to come into being. Jacob, dying in Goshen, the proverbial land of plenty, sees something still better than Goshen. His conviction of the goodness of God kindles an ardent and unquenchable hope of the amelioration of the state of his people. The vision of God is always accompanied by the vision of a better and happier world.<sup>2</sup>

¶ In the career of Columbus faith and hope supported each other. So sings the American poet, Maurice Francis Egan—

<sup>1</sup> R. Collyer, *The Life that Now Is*, 64.

<sup>2</sup> J. Strachan, *Hebrew Ideals*, ii. 150.

Who doubts has met defeat ere blows can fall;  
 Who doubts must die with no palm in his hand;  
 Who doubts shall never be of that high band  
 Which clearly answer—Present! to Death's call:  
 For Faith is life, and, though a funeral pall  
 Veil our fair Hope, and on our promised land  
 A mist malignant hang, if Faith but stand  
 Among our ruins, we shall conquer all.  
 O faithful soul, that knew no doubting low;  
 O Faith incarnate, lit by Hope's strong flame,  
 And led by Faith's own cross to dare all ill  
 And find our world!—but more than this we owe  
 To thy true heart; thy pure and glorious name  
 Is one clear trumpet call to Faith and Will.

2. *Faith and Love*.—Faith is energetic love. Divinely implanted love, spiritually inspired self-surrender increases every faculty of knowledge, deepens every impression made by truth, opens the eye which indifference or passion had blinded, purifies the gaze which prejudice or evil bias had corrupted and obscured, and so makes the trembling faith which can only cry, "I believe; help thou mine unbelief," grow, burn, gleam with holy enthusiasm, until it cries, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded."

¶ I have been writing lately on the subject of Keble's lines (Hymn for Sunday next before Advent). I have little doubt that the Church of Rome has paid far more attention than we have to that which forms the subject of this hymn—the treatment of penitence. She has more power to soothe, because she dwells chiefly on that which is the most glorious element in the nature of God—Love. Whereas Protestantism fixes attention more on that which is the strongest principle in the bosom of man—Faith.<sup>1</sup>

I ask not for Thy love, O Lord: the days  
 Can never come when anguish shall atone.  
 Enough for me were but Thy pity shown,  
 To me as to the stricken sheep that strays,  
 With ceaseless cry for unforgotten ways—  
 O lead me back to pastures I have known,  
 Or find me in the wilderness alone,  
 And slay me, as the hand of mercy slays.  
 I ask not for Thy love; nor e'en so much,  
 As for a hope on Thy dear breast to lie;

<sup>1</sup> F. W. Robertson, in *Life and Letters*, 244.

But be Thou still my shepherd—still with such  
 Compassion as may melt to such a cry;  
 That so I hear Thy feet, and feel Thy touch,  
 And dimly see Thy face ere yet I die.<sup>1</sup>

¶ In 1836 James Field, of Cork, called for the third time on an unsaved woman to whom he had been introduced. She cried out to him, "Oh, sir, I do not love God!" He replied, "What have you to do with loving God? How can you love *until you apprehend His love to you?* and this you cannot do until you believe. It is folly to think of loving God *before you obtain pardon.*" Tears gushed from her eyes, and she said she had never understood it before. As the two prayed, God set her soul at liberty, and then she found she could love God, *because He first loved her.* It was the gift of pardon that filled her heart with the love of gratitude.<sup>2</sup>

3. *Hope and Love.*—Who has not experienced what he and others call Christian hope, but which on close analysis is found to be little better than a faint and feeble desire after better things, and a desponding cry of the soul for what is just a grade better than blank despair? This is not the hope that saves. Contrast it with the full evidence of things hoped for, which is imparted by living faith. Let desire be large, and expectation strong; let hope embrace all Divine promises, and it becomes a vast capacity for blessedness, and often bursts out in solitary places and on dark nights into songs of rejoicing. Then is revealed what the Apostles call "patience," born of quiet waiting, with a smile upon its face, reflecting all the lustre of the Divine manifestation. Tribulation and sorrow are but the crucible in which this precious quality and energy of soul is refined. "This hope maketh not ashamed," and can never be disappointed, because it is a veritable foretaste of its own object—it is the earnest and foretaste of the purchased possession. What leads the soul from hope to hope, from the faint uplifting of the wearied weeping eye to the "hope full of immortality"? St. Paul gives us the answer: "Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us."

¶ Do you not think that the ordinary standpoint of so-called Christian teaching is undergoing a destruction, and that the

<sup>1</sup> George John Romanes, *Life and Letters*, 267.

<sup>2</sup> J. A. Clapperton, *Culture of the Christian Heart*, 58.

devil's travesty is waning? Terrorism is no real factor in Christianity. Surely Christianity is the response which follows the recognition of Love and its beneficent purpose of Universal beatitude. In that atmosphere the heart beats freely and fully, for it breathes the Hope which Love begets. We ought to breathe the Hope before we attempt to deal with the distresses of life; then should we be armed with the Sympathy that is powerful, and not merely with the sympathy that is the recognition of a common woe.<sup>1</sup>

¶ Yesterday, after reading *Romance of Rose*, thought much of the destruction of all my higher power of sentiment by late sorrow; and considered how far it might be possible to make love, though hopeless, still a guide and strength.<sup>2</sup>

Is any grieved or tired? Yea, by God's will:  
 Surely God's Will alone is good and best:  
 O weary man, in weariness take rest,  
 O hungry man, by hunger feast thy fill.  
 Discern thy good beneath a mask of ill,  
 Or build of loneliness thy secret nest:  
 At noon take heart, being mindful of the west;  
 At night wake hope, for dawn advances still.  
 At night wake hope. Poor soul, in such sore need  
 Of wakening and of girding up anew,  
 Hast thou that hope which fainting doth pursue?  
 No saint but hath pursued and hath been faint;  
 Bid love wake hope, for both thy steps shall speed,  
 Still faint yet still pursuing, O thou saint.<sup>3</sup>

4. *Faith, Hope, Love*.—When St. Paul takes three words, and couples them with a verb in the singular, he is not making a slip of the pen, or committing a grammatical blunder which a child could correct. But there is a great truth in that piece of apparent grammatical irregularity; for the faith, the hope, and the love, for which he can afford only a singular verb, are thereby declared to be in their depth and essence one thing, and it, the triple star, abides, and continues to shine; the three primitive colours are unified in the white beam of light. Do not correct the grammar, and spoil the sense, but discern what he means when he says, "Now abideth faith, hope, love." For this is what

<sup>1</sup> R. W. Corbet, *Letters from a Mystic of the Present Day*, 150.

<sup>2</sup> Ruskin in E. T. Cook's *Life of Ruskin*, ii. 267.

<sup>3</sup> Christina G. Rossetti, *Poems*, 164.



he means, that the two latter come out of the former, and that without it they are naught, and that it without them is dead.

(1) Faith is the rightful attitude of self and our neighbour to God: Hope is the recognition and welcome of God's purpose for self, and our neighbour: Love binds God, self, and our neighbour in the perfect bond of the Divinely purposed harmony.

¶ You have seen that famous picture of the French artist Millet, "The Angelus." You remember the scene which it depicts—a very homely and, at the first glance, prosaic scene: a potato-field and two figures, a man and a woman, surrounded by the implements of their toil. It is a dull, bleak landscape, and away across the level tract you see a village with the church-spire rising above the lowly roofs. It is evening, and the bell has rung out its call to prayer. Its silvery chime has reached the ears of the two labourers, and after the devout manner of their country they have hearkened to its call. They have dropped their tools, and they are standing erect, with bowed heads and folded hands, in the attitude of prayer. I once heard an interpretation of this picture from my old teacher, the late Professor Henry Drummond. There, he said, are the three elements of a complete life—Work, God, and Love. The field, the spade, the basket, and the barrow—there is Work; the bowed heads and the folded hands—there is Religion; the two, a man and a woman, whatever be their relationship—there is Love. And this is precisely the idea of the saying of St. Paul in our text.<sup>1</sup>

So Faith shall build the boundary wall,  
And Hope shall plant the secret bower,  
That both may show magnificent  
With gem and flower.

While over all a dome must spread,  
And Love shall be that dome above;  
And deep foundations must be laid,  
And these are Love.

(2) Though separated in the representation, faith, hope, and love are really *inseparable* companions, closely united, not only to every Christian, but also to each other. What, indeed, is faith without hope and love? A cold conviction of the intellect, but without life-awakening power in the heart, or mature fruit in the life. Without hope, faith would never behold heaven;

<sup>1</sup> D. Smith, *Man's Need of God*, 16.



but even if it could enter therein, heaven would lack its highest bliss. What is hope without faith and love? At most, an idle dream from which we soon shall sadly wake; a fragrant blossom in the garden, fading before it has brought forth fruit. And, lastly, what is love without hope or faith? The welling forth, perhaps, of natural feeling, but in no degree a spiritual principle of life. If love believes not, it must die; and if it hopes not in the same measure as it loves, it is then the source of unparalleled suffering. Thus, whichever of these three sisters we would separate from the others, in so doing we have subscribed her death-warrant; nay, even if two of them remain together, the brightness of their beauty is dimmed whenever the third has disappeared.

¶ That the whole substance of religion was faith, hope, and love; by the practice of which we became united to the will of God; that all beside is indifferent, and to be used only as a means, that we may arrive at our end, and be swallowed up therein, by faith and love.

That all things are possible to him who *believes*, that they are less difficult to him who *hopes*, that they are easier to him who *loves*, and still more easy to him who perseveres in the practice of these three virtues.<sup>1</sup>

¶ I remember reading about an English barrister, of refined mind but speculative tendencies, who had reached such a depth of Pyrrhonism, alike in philosophy and religion, that he had lost all faith in positive truth. His Christian wife grieved over him all the more that she perceived about him symptoms of incipient consumption. One day, however, as he lay on the sofa, she saw him gazing upwards, as if on some object, with an expression of soft delight and almost rapture. "What's the matter?" she asked. "Do you know, I have begun to conceive *hope*." "Hope of what?" "I don't know, but somehow I have *hope*." Ah! the haze was dissolving, phantoms were crystallizing into concrete realities and the transporting "*hope*" of finding solid footing on the rock of positive truth. Right speedily came that faith which overcometh the world—a childlike reception of the Gospel of Christ—terminating, and at no distant period, in a tranquil departure to the region of unclouded light.<sup>2</sup>

¶ John Knox, in his *History of the Reformation*, has preserved a beautiful comparison of faith, hope, and charity by Patrick

<sup>1</sup> Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, 23.

<sup>2</sup> D. Brown, *Memoir of John Duncan*, 78.

Hamilton, the Scottish martyr. Says Hamilton: "Faith cometh of the Word of God, Hope cometh of Faith, and Charity springeth of them both. Faith believes the Word, Hope trusteth after that which is promised by the Word, and Charity doeth good unto her neighbour, through the love which she hath to God, and gladness that is within herself. Faith looketh to God and His word; Hope looketh unto His gift and reward; Charity looketh unto her neighbour's profit. Faith receiveth God; Hope receiveth His reward; Charity looketh to her neighbour with a glad heart, and that without any respect of reward. Faith pertaineth to God only, Hope to His reward, and Charity to her neighbour."

Let love weep—

It cometh, that day of the Lord divine;  
And the morning star will surely shine  
On the long death-night of sleep.

Let faith fear,—

The unending light comes on apace;  
The path leads homeward from this place;  
Through the twilight home must appear.

Let hope despair,—

Let death and the grave shout victory,—  
That flush of the morning yet shall be,  
Which shall wake the slumberers there!

### *THESE THREE ABIDE.*

1. Amidst all that changes and is destined to pass away, three things there are, St. Paul tells us, that abide. Just as in a world of shadows and uncertainties we have learned to postulate as fundamental certainties three incontestable realities, God, self, and our neighbour; so amid the variety of external and transient manifestations of the religious life there remain unchangeably three activities or functions of the soul, which are perpetually concerned with these fundamental certainties. Much of the detail of religion is an accommodation to present necessities and will pass away when it has served its temporary purpose; but behind and beneath lie three essential and eternal principles of spiritual life—Faith, Hope, and Love.

2. The popular interpretation reads "now" as temporal instead of logical—identifying it with the "now" of verse 12, though the Greek words differ—as though the Apostle meant that for the present faith and hope "abide" with love, but love alone "abides" for ever. But St. Paul puts the three on the same footing in respect of enduringness—"these three" in comparison with the other three of verse 8—pointedly adding faith and hope to share and support the "abiding" of love; love is *greater* among these, not more lasting.

It is curious that this meaning has been so generally missed by readers of the passage. Learned readers, as well as unlearned, have failed to observe it. You may frequently see it assumed, in hymns and other religious literature, that faith and hope, instead of being associated with love in this quality of permanence, as St. Paul declares them to be, are contrasted with it, in that they are transitory, whilst love is eternal. "Faith will vanish into sight; Hope be emptied in delight; Love in heaven will shine more bright." Such language is plausible enough to be generally accepted. But it is at variance with St. Paul's view. The passage we are considering is not one of doubtful meaning; no competent interpreter could question that St. Paul's purpose is to say that faith, hope, love, all three abide; and that by "abide" he means that they have not the changing and transitory character which belongs to other things of which he has been speaking. It is true that he is asserting the supreme glory of love; it is greater, he says, than faith and hope. But these two sister graces share with it the significant distinction that they all abide.

3. The chief point, then, to be noticed in this statement, is the *permanence* it ascribes to those graces of which it speaks. It represents "faith, hope, and love, these three," as all alike abiding. Formerly the Apostle had said this of love in particular, declaring in the 8th verse that "love never faileth." But now, in repeating the statement, he extends it to the other two, ascribing to them also the same durability that he had previously noticed as an attribute of love. No doubt it was the design of the Apostle to point out in this respect the very striking contrast between these three essential graces, by which at all times the Christian

character must be distinguished, and those extraordinary gifts bestowed on the early Christian Church, which, however remarkable and useful while they endured, were only intended to continue for a season.

¶ If, loving well the creatures that are like yourself, you feel that you would love still more dearly creatures better than yourself—were they revealed to you;—if striving with all your might to mend what is evil, near you and around, you would fain look for a day when some Judge of all the Earth shall wholly do right, and the little hills rejoice on every side; if, parting with the companions that have given you all the best joy you had on Earth, you desire ever to meet their eyes again and clasp their hands,—where eyes shall no more be dim, nor hands fail;—if, preparing yourselves to lie down beneath the grass in silence and loneliness, seeing no more beauty, and feeling no more gladness—you would care for the promise to you of a time when you should see God's light again, and know the things you have longed to know, and walk in the peace of everlasting Love—*then*, the Hope of these things to you is religion, the Substance of them in your life is Faith. And in the power of them, it is promised us, that the kingdoms of this world shall yet become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.<sup>1</sup>

4. When we have looked backward and seen these three graces to be thus identical and unchanging in stages of human growth which are in mental conditions so far separated from each other, we shall have confidence in them as we look forward even beyond the grave. Are we to part with faith hereafter? Only if we give to the name Faith some narrow interpretation. Not, surely, if it is filial trust in the Father. It cannot be part of the reward of the future state that the children of God should cease to be filial, or to cherish that confiding trust in the Fatherly wisdom and goodness which was perfectly exhibited in the perfect Son of God. No; if childlike faith has continued from yesterday until to-day, we may know it to be of a nature to continue and abide for ever. But must not hope, as they say, be swallowed up in fruition? Not, it would seem, until the whole work of the Divine creation and government be brought to a standstill. Such an end is beyond the reach of our faculties to imagine. But the death of a Christian will not leave him without objects

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin, *The Bible of Amiens* (*Works*, xxxiii, 174).

of hope. After each of us dies there will be plenty of evil still to be purged out of God's world; there will be endless evolutions of the Divine purpose for the revealing of the Divine glory. Those that have gone before us, we may well believe, instead of having ceased to hope, are now hoping more earnestly, more continuously, more joyfully, more calmly, than we are. Of the continuance of love in the life to come one need say nothing, as it has not been possible to fall into the mistake of supposing that love could be stopped by death unless all conscious existence be believed to be stopped by it also.

¶ We are very much accustomed to speak of faith as destined in the future world to give place to vision, and of hope as destined, in like manner, to end in full fruition. This view is taken in the last verses of our 49th Paraphrase, of which the chapter before us is the groundwork. And by frequently using that beautiful Paraphrase, we have probably been led, without much consideration, to assume that love alone shall exist in heaven, while faith and hope shall be altogether superseded. But is there any solid Scriptural ground for such an assumption? There is nothing in the text itself to warrant it. Nor am I aware of any other passage that has ever been formally brought forward to confirm it. No faith in heaven! What, then, are we to make of those texts which speak of the glorified saints as "eating of the hidden manna," partaking of "the fruit of the tree of life,"—following the Lamb of God whithersoever He may lead them—and as guided by Him—to "living fountains of waters." Surely these expressions are as significant as words can be of a life of unceasing faith in the Redeemer. It is quite true that many of those things which are now objects of faith, shall hereafter be objects of sight. But it would be a very rash and sweeping conclusion thence to infer that in a future world there shall be no room and no occasion for faith at all. Unless, indeed, we are to be made absolutely omniscient at the very first moment of our entrance into the heavenly mansions, there must still remain a field, though not indeed the same field as that which we now have, for the exercise of faith. And then, in so far as faith can be held to consist in confidence towards God or dependence on the Saviour, we may surely venture to say that instead of ceasing in the world to come, it will be more fully developed and more perfectly maintained. With respect to hope, again, it is not to be questioned that many of those things to which it is for the present directed shall in our future state be actually possessed, so that they cannot then be hoped for any longer. But



does it follow that, after this life is ended, the Christian will have absolutely nothing whatever to hope for? Will it be nothing for the departed spirits of the faithful to anticipate the resurrection of their bodies, and to look forward to the triumphant issues of the coming judgment? And even when these glorious events have been consummated, will there not still remain the animating prospect of continually augmenting knowledge, unceasingly advancing happiness, and progressively increasing spiritual excellence to all eternity? We must either suppose that all that heaven has to give is to be enjoyed at once by the spirits of the redeemed when first they are translated thither, and that there is no progress of any kind to be afterwards made by them from glory to glory; or else we must allow that there is still something in reserve for them, besides what they at first attain, as a fit and proper object of Hope.<sup>1</sup>

5. Faith, hope, and love, these three represent the spiritual or Christian life, called also the eternal life, in the soul of man. It is this that has in its history and essential nature the witness of permanence. St. Paul found comfort in the evident progress from the more imperfect to the less imperfect which is to be traced in a part of our human nature. But he also derived comfort, and the more indispensable comfort, from contemplating the signs and working in man of the perfect and eternal Divine nature. And in order to realize that this which seemed to him best in man was really unchanging, he must have looked at it as he did at the changing forms of mental conception, in the stage of human childhood. In the child—he implies, if he does not fully affirm—he found the spiritual affections at least as admirable as in the man. These things, faith and hope and love, he perceived, manifest themselves with heavenly beauty in the young; they are also the signs of God's truest presence in the instructed and experienced man, and they will stand the shock of death, and remain with us, in virtue of their imperishable and eternal nature, in the dimly imagined world that lies on the other side of the grave.

¶ So with our youths. We once taught them to make Latin verses, and called them educated; now we teach them to leap and to row, to hit a ball with a bat, and call them educated. Can they plough, can they sow, can they plant at the right time,

<sup>1</sup> T. J. Crawford, *The Preaching of the Cross*, 349.



or build with a steady hand? Is it the effort of their lives to be chaste, knightly, faithful, holy in thought, lovely in word and deed? Indeed it is, with some, nay, with many, and the strength of England is in them, and the hope; but we have to turn their courage from the toil of war to the toil of mercy; and their intellect from dispute of words to discernment of things; and their knighthood from the errantry of adventure to the state and fidelity of a kingly power. And then, indeed, shall abide, for them and for us, an incorruptible felicity, and an infallible religion; shall abide for us Faith, no more to be assailed by temptation, no more to be defended by wrath and by fear;—shall abide with us Hope, no more to be quenched by the years that overwhelm, or made ashamed by the shadows that betray:—shall abide for us, and with us, the greatest of these; the abiding will, the abiding name of our Father. For the greatest of these is Charity.<sup>1</sup>

#### i. Faith Abides.

1. There is a common saying, which ninety out of a hundred people think comes out of the Bible, that “faith is lost in sight.” There is no such teaching in Scripture. True, in one aspect, faith is the antithesis of sight. St. Paul does say, “We walk by faith, not by sight.” But that antithesis refers only to part of faith’s significance. In so far as it is the opposite of sight, of course it will cease to be in operation when we shall know even as we are known, and see Him as He is. But the essence of faith is not the absence of the person trusted, but the emotion of trust which goes out to the person, present or absent. And in its deepest meaning of absolute dependence and happy confidence, faith abides through all the glories and the lustres of the heavens, as it burns amidst the dimnesses and the darknesses of earth. For ever and ever will dependence on God in Christ be the life of the glorified, as it was the life of the militant, Church. No millenniums of possession, and no imaginable increases in beauty and perfectness and enrichment with the wealth of God, will bring us one inch nearer to casting off the state of filial dependence which is, and ever will be, the condition of our receiving them all. Faith “abides.”

2. But how can faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, remain in the very presence of the realities themselves?

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies* (*Works*, xviii. 186).

There we shall see face to face. So it is clear that faith cannot be altogether the same as here. But in every essential point, it will be the same. For what is the ground of faith? What leads me to act on God's word, though I have never seen God, have never heard His voice? Is it not that I trust God, that I am content to leave myself in His hands, that I have confidence in His doing all things well? Is not this the essence of faith in ordinary life? Is it not that we trust one another, and have confidence in men doing their duty, and so we leave important matters to be transacted for us by others, having faith in them, as we express it? And in this its ordinary sense, will not faith remain in our new and higher state of being? Will not entire and unwavering trust in God form a component of the character of the saints in glory—a confidence compared to which the most perfect assurance ever attained here below is but doubt, an entire resting for the present and for the future on His wisdom and His love, of the perfect value of which we know nothing here?

¶ Caesar Malan's death-bed seemed to those who witnessed it the most surprising of all his achievements. Said the doctor to me one day on leaving him, "I have just beheld what I have often heard of, but what I never saw before. Now I have seen it, as I see this stick I carry in my hand." "And what have you seen?" I asked. "*Faith, faith*," he answered; "not the faith of a theologian, but of a Christian! I have seen it with my eyes."<sup>1</sup>

3. It would be a most serious mistake to think that there ever was a time in the history of our creation in the past, that there is any part of the infinite creation now, that there ever will be a time in the history of any conceivable creation of the future, in regard to which it has been, is, or shall be true that the spiritual life of creatures made in the image of God is not lived by faith in God. For what is the life of faith but the living, not independently and with self-reliance, but by the receiving of the life of God? And how can it accord with the relation between the Creator and the creature, that there should ever be any other spiritual life than this?

I singularly moved  
To love the lovely that are not beloved,  
Of all the Seasons, most

<sup>1</sup> *The Life, Labour, and Writings of Caesar Malan*, 459.

Love Winter, and to trace  
 The sense of the Trophonian pallor on her face.  
 It is not death, but plenitude of peace;  
 And the dim cloud that does the world enfold  
 Hath less the characters of dark and cold  
 Than warmth and light asleep;  
 And correspondent breathing seems to keep  
 With the infant harvest, breathing soft below  
 Its eider coverlet of snow.  
 Nor is in field or garden anything  
 But, duly looked into, contains serene  
 The substance of things hoped for, in the Spring,  
 And evidence of Summer not yet seen.<sup>1</sup>

## ii. Hope Abides.

1. Hope shares the prerogative and dignity of love, to stand on the wreck of worlds and gaze on the eternal Face which sinners may not see and live. The works of God shall pass away. The law of decay is not more plainly written on our mortal bodies than on the mightiest star that walks the frozen verge of heaven. Even spiritual gifts shall perish, unless faith and hope and love throw over them the asbestos robe of immortality. If prophecies there be, they shall be needed no more; if tongues there be, they shall cease; if knowledge there be, it shall be needed no more: but hope along with faith and love abideth evermore. There is room and work for hope even in the world where we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. If heaven is not poorer than earth, there must be unmeasured room for hope in revelations far beyond all that sinners can ask or think—revelations rising through the years of eternity, but always revelations of our Heavenly Father's love in Christ.

2. It is no more a Scriptural idea that hope is "lost in fruition" than it is that faith is lost in sight. Rather that future presents itself to us as the continual communication of an inexhaustible God to our progressively capacious and capable spirits. In that continual communication there is continual progress. Wherever there is progress there must be hope. And thus the fair form which has so often danced before us elusive, and has led us into bogs and miry places and then faded away,

<sup>1</sup> Coventry Patmore.

will move before us through all the long avenues of an endless progress, and will ever and anon come back to tell us of the unseen glories that lie beyond the next turn, and to woo us farther into the depths of heaven and the fulness of God. Hope "abides."

3. What is hope? The expectation of things to come—good things; brighter, better, fuller life. And the surer the expectation, the truer the hope. In the first dawn of the world's history, was not this hope an inspiration? Indeed it is the very perversion of hope that we see exemplified so strikingly in the desire to be wise, to be as gods (Gen. iii. 5, 6). And in our world to-day, is it not the glorious heritage of the sons of God, anticipated by hope, that makes the present not only bearable but instinct with strength, and fraught with victory? And can we conceive of any other world, or of any other state of life, where hope is not? where the goal is already reached, and only the dull monotony of existence is left? Nay, hope shines on the forehead of every happy world, as of our poor, sinful, struggling world. And in the immortal future shall hope cease? Nay, for that would be our doom. But rather, "for ever and ever"—or "unto the ages of the ages," as implying the opening up of an ever-growing history—there shall be the joyous expectation of fuller, richer, and more glorious life.

¶ We can imagine only one condition from which hope is for ever shut out; but one place over the portal of which is inscribed, "All hope abandon, ye who enter here." But in heaven, where the spirit shall be refined and quickened and exalted to the utmost, shall the keenest of all its pleasures, the life of all its delights, the spur of all its exertions, be absent? Hope *disappointed* indeed there shall be none, for hope shall be based on certainty; the eye of the soul shall rest, not on the flitting visions of earthly bliss, but on the calm realities of perfect knowledge. Hope *deferred* there shall be none; no more sickness of heart at long waiting; for the state of trial will be over, the perfect work of patience will be accomplished, and the hand which here is often stretched out till it wearies and stiffens and cannot grasp the object which it has reached, will there have but to open and be filled. But hope in all its blessedness, in all its fulness of joy, shall abide for ever.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. Alford, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, i. 130.

Bury Hope out of sight,  
 No book for it and no bell;  
 It never could bear the light  
 Even while growing and well:  
 Think if now it could bear  
 The light on its face of care  
 And grey scattered hair.

No grave for Hope in the earth,  
 But deep in that silent soul  
 Which rang no bell for its birth  
 And rings no funeral toll.  
 Cover its once bright head;  
 Nor odours nor tears be shed:  
 It lived once, it is dead.

Brief was the day of its power,  
 The day of its grace how brief  
 As the fading of a flower,  
 As the falling of a leaf,  
 So brief its day and its hour;  
 No bud more and no bower  
 Or hint of a flower.

Shall many wail it? not so:  
 Shall one bewail it? not one:  
 Thus it hath been from long ago,  
 Thus it shall be beneath the sun.  
 O fleet sun, make haste to flee;  
 O rivers, fill up the sea;  
 O Death, set the dying free.

The sun nor loiters nor speeds,  
 The rivers run as they ran,  
 Thro' clouds or thro' windy reeds  
 All run as when all began.  
 Only Death turns at our cries:—  
 Lo the Hope we buried with sighs  
 Alive in Death's eyes!<sup>1</sup>

### iii. Love Abides.

1. Love is the eternal form of the human relation to God. It, too, like the mercy which it clasps, "endureth for ever." It is greater than its linked sisters, because, whilst faith and hope

<sup>1</sup> Christina G. Rossetti, *Poems*, 137.

belong only to a creature, and are dependent and expectant of some good to come to themselves, and correspond to something which is in God in Christ, the love which springs from faith and hope not only corresponds to, but resembles, that from which it comes and by which it lives. The fire kindled is cognate with the fire that kindles; and the love that is in man is like the love that is in God. It is the climax of his nature; it is the fulfilling of all duty; it is the crown and jewelled clasp of all perfection. And so "abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love."

Round among the quiet graves,  
When the sun was low,  
Love went grieving,—Love who saves;  
Did the sleepers know?

At his touch the flowers awoke,  
At his tender call  
Birds into sweet singing broke,  
And it did befall

From the blooming, bursting sod  
All Love's dead arose,  
And went flying up to God  
By a way Love knows.<sup>1</sup>

2. The first thing about love is that it is Godlike, the second follows from the first, and that is, it is indestructible—

They sin who tell us love can die.  
With life all other passions fly,  
All others are but vanity.  
In Heaven ambition cannot dwell,  
Nor avarice in the vaults of Hell.  
Of earth, these passions of the earth,  
They perish where they have their birth,  
But love is indestructible:  
Its holy flame for ever burneth.  
From Heaven it came, to Heaven returneth,  
Full oft on earth, a troubled guest,  
At times deceived, at times oppressed,  
In Heaven it finds its perfect rest.  
It soweth here in toil and care,  
But the harvest-time of love is there.

<sup>1</sup> Louise Chandler Moulton.



When the last day is ended,  
And the nights are through  
When the last sun is buried  
In its grave of blue;

When the stars are snuffed like candles,  
And the seas no longer fret;  
When the winds unlearn their cunning,  
And the storms forget;

When the last lip is palsied  
And the last prayer said—  
Love shall reign immortal  
While the worlds lie dead!

#### *THE GREATEST OF THESE THREE.*

St. Paul, when he assigns the pre-eminence to love, has no intention of depreciating the value, still less of dispensing with the necessity, of those other graces to which he prefers it. For it is remarkable that he who in this passage extols love in a strain which none of the other writers of the New Testament has ever reached is the same who has also dwelt more largely and more forcibly than all the others on the inestimable preciousness of faith and hope,—attaching, indeed, to these two principles, and more particularly to faith, a measure of importance which men have objected to as, in their judgment, altogether inordinate and unwarranted.

Yet the first thing that strikes us is, that the whole civilized world has come round—at any rate, in theory—to the teaching of St. Paul. To an educated Roman of the time of St. Paul it would have seemed the most ridiculous assertion possible that the greatest of all virtues was love. To die with a smile on his face, to wrap himself up in the toga of his reserve, to be self-contained and absolutely self-controlled, that was his ideal, and a grand one, too, up to a certain point; but the attitude of Marcus Aurelius, for instance, towards Christianity, shows us that the educated Roman of the day would have heard with something like contempt that “the greatest of these is love.” And yet to-day take up any magazine—the most anti-Church magazine that you

can find—and look to see what is its teaching about social matters. What is it that the popular magazine puts before us as the greatest thing of all? Away with creeds! Away with dogmas! But what is important? The service of man; doing good to one's fellows! The verdict of the popular magazine of to-day is, that cleverness may be a great thing, and learning a great thing, but a greater than these is love. Or pick up a philosophical treatise on ethics, and, in a more cumbrous style, you will find the same thing said. What comes out as the ultimate basis of conduct in such books? Is it not Altruism? But Altruism after all is but a cumbrous name for love, and was taught to the world by Jesus Christ; and therefore the verdict of the ethical treatise is the verdict of St. Paul, that "the greatest of these is love." Or, again, take practical life. Who is the villain that is hissed off the stage not only of the theatre but of real life? Is it the dishonest man? Is it the drunkard? No! It is the hard-hearted man; it is the man with no sympathy; it is the man with no kindness. Let a man be kind-hearted and generous, and there is nothing that he is not forgiven to-day. You will find his victims waiting round the corner to give him another chance. He may break every statute in the Statute Book, but if he is kind and affectionate everything is forgiven him. The popular verdict of the day is that sobriety is a great thing and honesty is a great thing, but a greater than these is love.

¶ There are people who believe they could have improved this thirteenth verse of the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. I have found one man who, if he had been acting as amanuensis, and St. Paul had said, "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three, and the greatest of these is love"—he would have held up his hands and said, "No, Paul, that is a mistake; put *compact organization of the visible church* for the word love, and you will have it right." There are multitudes of people in the churches who believe that the outer form of the organization of the church has more to do with religion conquering the world than love. I have known a man who, if he had been there, would have insisted that the word *beauty* should be substituted for the word love. There are other men who would have substituted the word *music*, so that it would read: "And now abideth faith, hope, music, these three; but the greatest of these is music." There is another class of men who would have said, "Paul, you should substitute conscience for the word charity, so that it shall read: And now

abideth faith, hope, *conscience*, these three; and the greatest of these is conscience." I suppose there are not fewer than twenty-five people here this morning who would have seconded the suggestion. There are others who would have substituted for this word love the word *zeal*: "And now abideth faith, hope, zeal, these three; but the greatest of these is zeal." There are many who, if they had been there, would have substituted for the word love the phrase *sound doctrine*: "Now abideth faith, hope, sound doctrine, these three; but the greatest of these is sound doctrine."<sup>1</sup>

Why is Love the greatest? There are many reasons.

1. *Love is likest God*.—Faith and hope, from their nature, are recipients, while it is of the nature of love to be communicative, and thus to be possessed of that higher blessedness which the Lord Jesus ascribes to giving before receiving. Faith and hope, too, are necessarily expressive, in all who exercise them, of imperfection and dependence, and as such can be attributed only to subordinate creatures. We cannot ascribe to God anything that resembles them. He who knows all things, and can do all things of Himself, has no room for relying on the testimony or aid of others. And He who is infinitely blessed in the possession of a Divine fulness cannot be said to hope, or to lack anything that could be hoped for. But love, on the contrary, is the attribute of superior natures. It is held by the highest creatures in common with their Creator. It belongs to the character of Him in whom all fulness dwells. Indeed it is His pre-eminent and crowning attribute; and the more we attain of it, so much the more do we approach Him in His Divine excellence, so much the more are we fitted to share in His unutterable blessedness. "Beloved," saith an Apostle, "let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God; God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

Faith and hope belong to finite beings only, while love is not thus limited. It is an attribute of the Divine: nay, it is the very name of God. "God is not faith," says the commentator Bengel in his epigrammatic way, "and God is not hope, but God is love."

<sup>1</sup> J. R. Thompson, *Burden Bearing*, 152.

(1) It follows that love *interprets God*.—The quickest, the truest, the fullest interpretation of God comes through love. How do you know a man? Do you know a man when you describe him by saying he is so many feet high, weighs so many pounds, his hair is of such a colour, his eyes are of such a hue, he is engaged in such a business, he lives in such a house? Is that a description of the man? Is that the way you interpret and analyse a man? We begin to know a man when we find out the master passion of his nature, and we never know anything about him until we understand that. You may know ever so much about a man externally, you may know ever so much about him intellectually, but until you know what quickens it all, and colours it all, and directs it all, until you have followed the subtle windings of his soul, and know in what dispositions and purposes the man has his hidden life, you will never know him.

(2) And it *makes us like God*.—For to all the extent we possess and cherish it, we are like God, and partakers of a Divine nature. The possessor of it is not merely a passive recipient of good, a shrivelled, sordid abject, turning all his thoughts and desires inward on his own littleness; he becomes, like his Maker, a pattern, a source of good; a centre of diffusive benevolence; a fountain whose streams irrigate the earth; a sun whose light and heat dissipate the rigours of night and winter, and dispense the blessings of day and summer.

2. *Love is greatest because it is the end of redemption*.—Love, we are told, is the end of the commandment. It is so, whether by "the commandment" we understand the Law or the Gospel. As for the Moral Law, what is its sum or substance but love to God and love to man? And as for the Gospel, what is its grand design but to rescue men from a state of enmity against God and against one another, to restore them, not only to the Divine favour, but to the Divine image, of which Love is certainly the characteristic and prevailing feature; and by writing upon their hearts that great law of Love, in which all the Divine statutes are summarily comprehended, to bring them into cordial submission to the will of God, and to win from them a cheerful and thorough obedience to His commandments? This is unquestionably the ultimate design of the Gospel. Finding men "without

hope" and "without God in the world," living in enmity, distraction, and alienation, it aims at raising them from their sin and selfishness to the love of God and of the brethren. As necessary means for the accomplishment of this purpose, faith and hope are of inestimable importance, bringing as they do the Gospel to bear upon us, with all its sanctifying and love-inspiring influences. But still, as being mainly means, they are subordinate to the end or final result to which they are conducive; just as the scaffolding, though necessary, is less valuable than the finished building that is erected by the use of it, or as the sowing of the seed, however indispensable, is of less consideration in itself than the reaping of the precious and abundant grain. Faith is the leaf, hope is the blossom, but love is the fruit of the tree of righteousness; and here, too, the leaf and the blossom are for the sake of the fruit. Only we must think of these, not as giving place to each other in time, but as flourishing together on the same eternal stem. Faith may rely on the mercies and promises of God, and hope may anticipate their full and final enjoyment; but love is that actual consummation of blessedness, begun on earth and to be perfected in heaven, to which these other excellent graces are subsidiary, and from their subservience to which they derive their chief importance.

¶ True religion is a radical thing, that is, it goes to the root of matters. Paul tells us that great and needful for a complete life as faith and hope may be, it is Love—supreme, absolute Love, which is the one essential. Love is the only religion; there is no true religion which is loveless. You may have everything else—orthodoxy, intelligence, faith, whatever you like, but if you have not got love you are as a lantern without light, and as a man without a soul.<sup>1</sup>

(1) *It is therefore most beautiful.*—God has revealed His benevolence in the beautiful, and the beautiful is the image of His benevolence. Real affection always tries to express itself similarly. In Divine Worship we bring the tribute of our music, or our flowers,—even one poor flower may mean much—and seek to make everything attractive in the sanctuary. So in our human relations, love tries to make everything beautiful. It adorns the home, adds a touch of colour here and there, the

<sup>1</sup> *Quintin Hogg*, 302.



presence of some garden trophies. When a wife professes it for a husband, or a mother for her child, and is willing to leave everything untidy, gloomy, neglected, or when a father is harsh and glum and never thinks of helping, something is radically wrong. In impoverished homes we see the difference—in one the pathetic endeavour to make all charming, in the other, the disposition to leave everything unclean and hideous.

¶ I once read of a school where there was a very plain girl. Somewhat cruelly her companions would remind her of her lack of attractions. The school-teacher saw the depressing effect on her of this treatment. One day she handed her a coarse lump covered with black earth, and said: "This is like yourself; only plant it." The schoolgirl took it home and obeyed, not understanding. Out of it grew a Japanese lily. Then she perceived. And in the progress of time love in her soul imparted a heavenly charm to her character and to her face as well.<sup>1</sup>

¶ "As to other points," said John Milton, "what God may have determined for me I know not, but this I know—that if He ever instilled an intense love of moral beauty into the breast of any man, He has instilled it into mine. Ceres, in the fable, pursued not her daughter with a greater keenness of inquiry than I, day and night, the idea of perfection."<sup>2</sup>

(2) *It is most peaceful.*—There is a majesty of Divine serenity in love. We always associate a holy calm with God. When it is said that a thousand years with Him are as one day, we immediately think of Him as moving reposefully. Our Saviour in all the strain of His tempted and tempestuous life invited the world to come to Him for rest. Wherever there is hate there must be agitation, uncertainty, and possible anarchy. Peace comes when we are at peace with the God of peace, and with our fellow-beings.

¶ Columba renounced the warlike frenzy of his youth and became a leader in the creative arts of peace and the preacher of supernatural hopes. He made Iona a centre of light and loveliness. And when he came to die his end was full of holy quietness. He sent this message to his spiritual children: "Let peace and charity, a charity mutual and sincere, reign always among you." St. Cuthbert also was gentle and composed. During his wanderings when his followers were sad, he would

<sup>1</sup> G. C. Lorimer, *The Modern Crisis in Religion*, 249.

<sup>2</sup> N. D. Hillis, *The Investment of Influence*, 261.



say: "Never did man hunger who served God faithfully;" and beholding the eagle above, he would add: "by it even food can come." When a snow-storm in Fife hedged him in, one said to him: "The snow closes the road along the shore to us;" another added: "The storm bars our way over the sea." St. Cuthbert answered: "There is still the way of heaven that lies open."<sup>1</sup>

3. *Love is greatest in influence.*—Love is described in the context as "seeking not her own." Equally boundless with the others in its views, it looks constantly abroad, without any regard to self, opens the heart and hand to all whom it can benefit, and makes it its sole aim and never-ceasing vocation to promote the glory of God and the welfare of all mankind. Unlike the two kindred graces here compared with it, it leads the Christian to regard himself not as an isolated being, whose chief concern is to secure his own spiritual interests, but as a member of that great family of which God is the Father and all men are brethren, and in which the members ought ever to be linked together by the sacred bonds of amity and peace.

Love is more than pity. Pity stands in the porch, its eyes watching the poor wayfarer who comes wearied and footsore, ragged and perishing. And pity bids the servant search if there is any scrap of meat and any cast-off clothing that can be spared. But look again, pity stands and watches more intently; the face is changed; the tears gather; the man is stirred; he runs. In spite of rags and wretchedness, he falls upon the wanderer's neck. He kisses him and presses him to his heart. The wondering servant comes forth with a crust or two of bread, and an old coat. No indeed, that might do for pity, but this is *love*. "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." That is *love*. Pity saw the wants, and would give what it could spare; but love saw the son, and could not give enough.

Love found upon the battle's edge  
A coward fleeing from the strife;  
And sent him forth his heart in pledge,  
Valiant thro' life.

<sup>1</sup> G. C. Lorimer.

Love touched dumb lips that could not pray,  
And lo, they uttered prayer and song;  
Love hath so subtle sweet a way,  
Love is so strong.

It is because love is the first fact of all facts in the Gospel of Christ that the Gospel is fitted to be a universal Gospel. All men have hearts, and love is the same thing to every heart. An idea is not the same thing to every mind, but love is the same thing to every heart. A loving smile on the face of a Christian woman in China does not require to be translated into Chinese in order to be understood by a Chinaman. A child can perfectly interpret the sweetness in its mother's face long before it can translate into thoughts of its own the words she utters. If thought is the soul's prose, love is its music, and we know that music will steal easily into many a spot to which words stiffly articulated would be coldly refused admittance.

(1) *It secures obedience.*—"If ye love me, keep my commandments." In this exhortation, love to Christ is the mighty energy that produces holy obedience. The loving eye is quick to discern the will, the wish of the beloved. The heart which truly loves cannot break one of the least of these commandments. Even if the commandment seem arbitrary, it is enough that He who is supremely loved has said, "This do in remembrance of me." That is enough. Such motive is sufficient. It is simple, clear, and explicit. The obedience which is the witness, the pledge, the consequence of love, and is neither formal nor perfunctory, but the outcome of a self-sacrificing affection, is alone well-pleasing.

(2) *It is the source of knowledge.*—"He that loveth not, knoweth not God." This is true of other objects of both love and knowledge, as certainly as it is true of the love and knowledge of the Lord God. We do not know any thing, any person, any science, until we love it. The "dry light" needed for scientific pursuit is the eye unbleared by prejudice, unfilled with tears of foolish and inappropriate emotion, not an eye which does not flash with love. It is sometimes said that "love is blind." Cupid has been imaged with shaded eyes. No greater mistake can be made. Love has microscopic eyes to see both the faults and excellences of the beloved objects. What a world this would be if mothers could see in all children the Divine attractions and

worth which they do see in their first-born; and if lovers could see in all persons the wonderful lovable-ness they easily discern in one another! It is only the lover of truths, of persons, of countries, of great causes and principles, who really and veritably knows them.

¶ “Love seeks not to limit its devotion but to *find opportunities of expressing it*. Would you know God? I say to you, discover what true love means. Get your heart so full of it that it will send you forth in God’s Spirit seeking to save the lost, yearning to redeem the erring and sinful, binding up the broken-hearted, drying streaming eyes, and comforting them that mourn; get such a love as that into your soul, and you need look no further for an image of God. Moreover, not only is it true that every one that loveth knoweth God, but it is equally true that you will know God just to the extent that you really love and no more.”<sup>1</sup>

4. *Love is the greatest because it embraces and harmonizes the rest.*—It is love that gives faith and hope their very life. How can we truly trust where we love not? In that case faith is but a selfish grasping after one’s own good. But, inspired by love, it is the grateful acceptance of the love of God, as in itself the best gift, and the pledge of all good gifts besides. Hope likewise, without love, is but the selfish anticipation of one’s own joy. But, as inspired by love, it is the glad expectancy that God will work all things according to His good pleasure.

But Love an everlasting crown receiveth;  
For She is Hope, and Fortitude, and Faith,  
Who all things hopeth, beareth, and believeth.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Quintin Hogg*, 304.

<sup>2</sup> *Ruskin*.



THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.

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## THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.

But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of them that are asleep.—1 Cor. xv. 20.

1. Do we recognize the immense debt which we owe to the great Apostle of the Gentiles? We base our hopes for time and eternity on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Well, it was St. Paul who was the first to pierce beneath their surface and seize their hidden meaning and power. The Twelve, in their early preaching days, were staggered by the death, and only half understood the resurrection. They had to sit at St. Paul's feet before their Messianic hopes broadened out into the eternal Gospel.

2. The Apostle has been contemplating the long train of dismal consequences which he sees would arise if we had only a dead Christ. He thinks that he, the Apostle, would have nothing to preach, and we nothing to believe. He thinks that all hope of deliverance from sin would fade away. He thinks that, the one fact which gives assurance of immortality having vanished, the dead who had nurtured the assurance have perished. And he thinks that if things were so, then Christian men, who had believed a false gospel, and nourished an empty faith, and died clinging to a baseless hope, were far more to be pitied than men who had had less splendid dreams and less utter illusions.

Then, with a swift revulsion of feeling, he turns away from that dreary picture, and with a change of key, which the dullest ear can appreciate, from the wailing minors of the preceding verses, he breaks into this burst of triumph. "Now"—things being as they are, for it is the logical "now," and not the temporal one—Christ is risen from the dead, and that as the first-fruits of them that slept.

3. What a shout of joy there is in that word "now" with which the Apostle opens out into his glorious theme of the Resurrection. It has been struggling to get out, through discords and obscuring passages of controversial doubt. This great theme of the Apostolic Gospel had been dragged down by the cries of those who say there is no resurrection of the dead; down deeper into the sombre depths of a false witness to God, of a tragic mistake in estimating evidence; down into a gloom, where the holy dead lie only as so many perished lives, crushed by sin, and a challenge to despair. We hardly trace a note of the first inspiration in the dismal discord of broken hopes and fooled expectations: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." But it is at this point that the resurrection theme bursts out, rising above and upon the shifting discords, and opening up out of the passages which ended only in woe. "Now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of them that are asleep." Christian preaching was not a proclamation of meaningless and empty platitudes, not a principle incapable of producing any good results; God's messengers were not false witnesses; the Christian dead were not perished; Christian life was not a hollow sham, a cunningly devised fable. All was safe all was bright; the brighter because the very discordance of the doubt could only open out into this: Christ was risen, His people should also rise.

The subject is the Resurrection of Christ as the pledge of our Resurrection. Take it in three parts—

- I. The Possibility of the Resurrection.
- II. The Power of the Resurrection.
- III. The Promise of the Resurrection.

## I.

### THE POSSIBILITY OF THE RESURRECTION.

1. The Christian doctrine of the Resurrection is a stumbling-block to faith because we have allowed ourselves to exalt and to exaggerate death to a degree altogether beyond reason and Scripture. We speak, that is to say, and mourn, as though death were the last law of life, as though death were the ultimate fact

of our experience, and then we have to smuggle in our hope of the resurrection as a miraculous exception to this universal power of death. Exactly the opposite is true. Life is the law of nature, and death a natural means to more life and better. Death is the lower fact, and life the higher. Or more specifically, the resurrection of Jesus is not the great exception to natural law; it is an exemplification of the higher, universal law of life.

The earth was dead, so they tell us, ages ago. But now how this earth lives! There is hardly a cliff too barren for nature not to hang some blooming thing upon it; and the old earth teems with life. Furthermore, even here, where death reigns, life has been growing higher, more complex, more capable of larger correspondences with things. Between the lowest living thing and the brain of man there is a difference of life wide as the distance between the earth and the heavens. That first infinitesimal point of life has no world with which to establish relations larger than the microscopic field in which we have looked and discovered it, but we have already established relations of thought and knowledge with the farthest stars. Plainly then, without any doubt, life is something stronger thus far upon this earth than death. Notwithstanding death, life grows to be more and richer.

What is death, so far as we can see what it is? Here is a minute living thing in a glass of water. You turn the water out. That living particle is now mere dust upon the glass. Dead,—that is, it is no longer moving in an element corresponding to its capacity of vital movements. What is death then? A living thing is no longer in harmony with its surroundings. It is thrown out of its own proper correspondence with things; it is dead. So death is a relative thing. It is simply some wrong or imperfect adjustment of life to external conditions. But death may be partial, then, not entire. A part of the body may be dead. A man may be dead in some relations, and still live in others. There is a sense in which we die daily. Parts of us are thrown out of vital relations. The body may begin to die long before it is dead. Death is but a relative, negative thing. Life is the principle, the force, the law; death the limitation, the accident, the partial negation of God's great affirmation of life in things.

¶ The weakest point in the historical acceptance of the Fall certainly is its theory of death; for if death in the case of man be a penal punishment for breaking the Divine law, how happens it that this penalty should lay low not only the guilty party, which is the proper nature of all penalties, but should travel with an indiscriminate sweep over the whole length and breadth of the creation? Death is not a horror but a universal phenomenon; all things die just as certainly as they are born. Flowers die; quadrupeds die; birds die; fishes die—fishes! there they lie enswathed by millions in some mud-beds of the primeval slime, thousands of thousands of years possibly before the appearance of the unfeathered biped on this terrestrial stage, scarcely with any presentiment of Adam's first sin. The ecclesiastical theory of death, therefore, plainly breaks down, by the logical defect of explaining only a small number of the facts. Had it been otherwise,—had man been the only creature that knew death,—the theory might have some plausible ground on which to stand. But a more fundamental objection remains. Death is an evil, but to whom?—to the creature who dies, and to all who have special cause to lament its loss; but is it an evil to the universe? to this earth?—manifestly not; for if all the people that have been born on the earth from Adam until now had lived and not known death, where would the room have been for them? Rejuvenescence is one of the grandest and most sublime facts in the divine constitution of things: so that young persons may constantly appear on what to them is a new and therefore a stimulating scene, old persons must depart and make room.<sup>1</sup>

¶ As to death, any one who understands Nature at all thinks nothing of it. Her whole concern is perpetually to produce nourishment for all her offspring. We go that others may come—and better, if we rear them in the right way. In talking of these deep things, men too often make the error of imagining that the world was made for themselves.<sup>2</sup>

2. Physical death is not made the important thing in our Bibles. Physical death does not hold the first place in the economy of redemption. The Bible assigns a subordinate place to our King of Terrors. The Book of Genesis, it is true, invests natural death with certain punitive fears; but it does not elevate death to the rank of the supreme and final transaction between man and his Maker. Adam was not commanded by the Lord to live every day as though it were his last, himself a slave bound under the

<sup>1</sup> John Stuart Blackie, *Notes of a Life*, 270.

<sup>2</sup> George Meredith.

fear of death; he was commanded to go and work in the sweat of his brow, but with a promise of God in his heart. Man is to work out his time here, and to pass through death, as a being born under the higher law of the spirit, and with the possibility of eternal life always before him.

And in the New Testament the chief use made of the fact of death is as a metaphor. Jesus makes a metaphor of what we call death. To Him sin is death; the maid whom the people thought dead, He said, was asleep. The crisis of a soul's history is not, in the Bible, the death of the body. The fact of physical death and resurrection is used as the symbol of the greater change of a soul from sin to life.

¶ It is comparatively easy to set our teeth and face the inevitable with "a grin"; but the "highest bravery" is to hide our anguish with a smile. I do think I make a decently good Stoic, but confess that in times like this Christians have the pull. Nevertheless, I have often thought of the words, "I am not in the least afraid to die," and wondered if, when my time should come, I would be able to say them. But now I know that I can, and this even in the bitterness of feeling that one's work is prematurely cut short.<sup>1</sup>

¶ If we Christians believe the smallest fraction of what we pretend to believe, there is but little to mourn over in death. I know not when or how that veiled messenger may come to me, but this I do know, that it can come only at the bidding of my Father. I know its mission can be nothing more than the unclothing of this poor weak body of my humiliation to clothe me with the body of His glory. . . . Death is not only an exodus, it is also an entrance; while we stand by the bedside and say, "He is gone," they on the other side are welcoming him with unspeakable joy.<sup>2</sup>

3. The only thing to be feared is spiritual death. That is non-adjustment of our hearts to God. The soul out of harmony with love and truth may become as dead as the animalcule left dry upon the edge of the empty glass. To attempt to live as an immortal soul without love, and not as in God's presence, is to dream of living in a vacuum. The true life is to know God. Even now they are most alive who have in pure and loving thoughts the largest relationship to all good. The wages of sin

<sup>1</sup> George John Romanes, *Life and Letters*, 317.

<sup>2</sup> *Quintin Hogg*, 308.



is death—death creeping into the heart; death clouding the eye of the intellect; death, as Jesus said, destroying the soul in Gehenna.

¶ Dante saw some souls in hell whose bodies were still alive on earth,—their friends in Florence and Lucca had not the faintest idea that these men, seemingly a part of everyday life, were, all the time, “dead souls.” There is hardly a more terrible idea in all that terrible book, and yet it is a possibility in our own daily life—this atrophy of the spiritual nature, corresponding to the atrophy of the poetical nature which Darwin noted in himself as due to his own neglect. Clifford, in *A Likely Story*, forcibly depicts a soul awaking in the next world to find that through this unconscious starvation, there was no longer anything in him to correspond with God.<sup>1</sup>

They pass me by like shadows, crowds on crowds,  
Dim ghosts of men, that hover to and fro,  
Hugging their bodies round them like thin shrouds  
Wherein their souls were buried long ago:  
They trampled on their youth, and faith, and love,  
They cast their hope of human-kind away.  
With Heaven's clear messages they madly strove,  
And conquered,—and their spirits turned to clay:  
Lo! how they wander round the world, their grave,  
Whose ever-gaping maw by such is fed,  
Gibbering at living men, and idly rave,  
“We, only, truly live, but ye are dead.”  
Alas! poor fools, the anointed eye may trace  
A dead soul's epitaph in every face!<sup>2</sup>

4. The resurrection of Jesus was in accordance with the higher, universal law of life. Death is for life, not life for death, in the ultimate constitution of this universe. The resurrection of Jesus is an instance of the general law that life is lord of death. His resurrection, as our text puts it, is the first-fruits of them that sleep. In the opinion of the Apostle the resurrection of Jesus was no more out of the Divine order of things, no more contrary to the ultimate law of nature, than the first-fruits of the summer are exceptions to the general law of life which in the autumn shall show its universal power in every harvest field.

5. This was Jesus' teaching concerning the resurrection. He

<sup>1</sup> L. H. M. Soulsby, *Stray Thoughts for Girls*, 160.

<sup>2</sup> Lowell, “The Street.”



answered the Sadducees of His generation not merely by asserting His knowledge that the dead shall be raised; He placed the fact of the resurrection upon the fundamental principle that life, not death, is God's first law. "But that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed, in *the place concerning* the Bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now he is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him."

6. This, then, is clearly and unmistakably the Biblical teaching of the resurrection. It is in accordance with law. It is in the Divine order of the creation. Why should it seem otherwise to us? Why should we regard it as a thing incredible that God should raise the dead? Partly because in our pagan philosophies we have exaggerated the place and importance of death in the world; partly, also, because we have fallen into gross and carnal imaginations of the resurrection and eternal life, which would be violations of natural law most difficult to conceive. But, planting the standard of our faith firmly upon this high Biblical doctrine of the resurrection as the final fulfilment of the law of life, let us survey the field of nature and see whether we have learned anything to make it a thing incredible that God should raise the dead.

7. Our Lord's own resurrection is set forth as an event which could not possibly have failed to occur. We say Jesus' resurrection was a miracle, that is, contrary to what might have been expected—a great exception to the law of death. But that is not the way the Scriptures put it. They say, "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God . . . whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not *possible* that he should be holden of it." "Moreover my flesh also shall dwell in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption." It would be impossible for death to hold a principle of life like the Spirit of that Man of Nazareth. It would be a violation of all law should the Holy One be given over to corruption. There is something inherently inconceivable and impossible in such a thought. How can Holiness see corruption? how can life itself be given over to death? Impossible! It would have been a miracle, had Jesus *not* risen

from the dead. It would have been a violation of the inmost principle of the creation, had the mere dust of this earth held Him as its own for ever. It would have been a miracle without reason, a miracle not against the ordinary course of nature merely, but against God,—the living God,—had He not risen from the dead, the first-fruits of this power and order of Divine life in the creation.

¶ Dean Bradley, in his Easter Day sermon at Westminster Abbey, put his finger on the very centre of the contrast between ancient and modern feeling concerning Easter, when he said that while it was the crucifixion of Christ that was to "the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness" in the great day when Christianity first came into the world, it is no longer the Crucifixion but the Resurrection—which to both Jews and Greeks, though a great marvel, was a marvel which attracted rather than repelled them—that seems to modern pride and scepticism a stumbling-block and foolishness. We feel no difficulty where the early believers felt most difficulty, in accepting the tremendous humiliation and sorrow and shame of the cross. On the contrary, as Dean Bradley told his hearers, the story of the Man of Sorrows is wholly credited by the sceptical world of to-day, and is accepted even with eager reverence and gratitude. It is the suffering, the forgiveness, the resignation, the peace, the calm, the fortitude, the sympathy, the "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children," the "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," the "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you—let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid," in which we all believe—even sceptics and those who are more than sceptics, who assert positively that "miracles do not happen." The shame does not humiliate us; we can see through it to the infinitely greater glory behind; whereas the Jews found it a sore stumbling-block to their pride of race, and the Greeks looked down upon it as radically inconsistent with that intellectual caste to which they ascribed the sole possession of "the good and beautiful" in all its perfection. To them the asserted resurrection seemed that which alone gave a glimmer of probability to the bold assertion that God had manifested Himself in human nature only to die upon the cross, and submit to the jeers and scoffs of Jewish and Roman ridicule. To us there seems something intrinsically convincing in the assertion that this great death was died, that that majestic calm and that magnanimous sympathy prevailed even over the torture

of the cross; we come to our difficulties only when we come to the assertion that He who died that supernatural death really lived again to be recognized by those who saw Him die and heard Him foretell their own discomfiture and dispersion. The early disciples found it all but impossible to believe that a Divine nature could go through physical and moral humiliation. Our difficulty is not in the least in believing in that which is Divine enough to overcome any combination, however overwhelming, of physical and moral humiliation. What we find difficulty in believing is, that that which is morally and spiritually supernatural involves even any power at all of controlling or overruling what we suppose to be the fixed necessities of physical law. Our minds are jaded and hag-ridden, as it were, by the physical fatalities of modern science; and yet modern science itself might, if we only used our eyes, warn us of the extraordinary blunder we are making in thus depreciating the true power of mind over matter.<sup>1</sup>

¶ For the Apostles, the resurrection of Jesus meant that He who had claimed to be the destined Son of Man had been approved, justified, and glorified by the Father, according to the rule by which resurrection is the established and almost natural consequence and proof of justice. What they had doubted was His claim to be the Christ; not the possibility of His resurrection. When He rose, their trust in Him, in their own redemption with and through Him, in His whole Gospel of the coming Kingdom and His own place in it, was confirmed and verified, not by an exceptional but by a regular occurrence. Resurrection is the fruit of righteousness, and a tree is known by its fruit.<sup>2</sup>

8. What was miraculous about Jesus' resurrection was not that God raised Him from the dead, but that He was raised before the last great day, and that He should be seen by men, and recognized in His transitional or intermediate state between earth and heaven. The visibility on earth of the risen Lord, before He ascended to His Father and ours, was exceptional, out of the common course, or miraculous.

¶ If you should see a tree break into blossom in the month of June, and the next morning find the fruit already ripe upon the bough, you would say, That is extraordinary! It is not indeed contrary to the nature of the tree that fruit should ripen on the bough, yet contrary to all our experience of growth that

<sup>1</sup> R. H. Hutton, *Aspects of Religious and Scientific Thought*, 159.

<sup>2</sup> G. Tyrell, *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, 140.

the fruit should ripen in a summer's day. That fruit would be a miracle upon that tree; yet not in itself contrary to the nature of the tree, but only to its ordinary conditions of fructification. The fruit itself would be perfectly natural, only the method of its growth would be extraordinary. And it would not be impossible to conceive an enhancement, or quickening, of nature's forces which might cause a plant to break into fruitfulness contrary to our experience of its usual times and seasons. Somewhat so, in the view we are now trying to win, is Jesus' resurrection a first-fruit of the tree of life;—not in itself contrary to the law of life, but in its manner and time out of the common order. In the miracle of His resurrection we have only to think of God's quickening, or anticipating, by His power the course of nature, not as violating any real principle of it.<sup>1</sup>

The yearly miracle of spring,  
Of budding tree and blooming flower,  
Which Nature's feathered laureates sing  
In my cold ear from hour to hour,

Spreads all its wonders round my feet;  
And every wakeful sense is fed  
On thoughts that o'er and o'er repeat,  
“*The Resurrection of the Dead!*”

If these half vital things have force  
To break the spell which winter weaves,  
To wake, and clothe the wrinkled corse  
In the full life of shining leaves;

Shall I sit down in vague despair,  
And marvel if the nobler soul  
We laid in earth shall ever dare  
To wake to life, and backward roll

The sealing stone, and striding out,  
Claim its eternity, and head  
Creation once again, and shout,  
“*The Resurrection of the Dead*”?<sup>2</sup>

## II.

### THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION.

1. Have we yet entered into the grandeur and depth of St. Paul's teaching about the Resurrection? What is his teaching?

<sup>1</sup> Newman Smyth.

<sup>2</sup> George Henry Boker.

(1) St. Paul insists that Jesus Christ did actually rise from the dead and appeared to him, to Cephas, to the Twelve, to five hundred brethren, to all the Apostles, to James; and he infers that the appearance was of one and the same character throughout. It was no vision—in the popular sense of that word—still less an hallucination that they experienced, but a direct impression made by a living and active Person.

(2) He asserts consistently that no substantial difference exists between the resurrection of Jesus Christ and that of His followers. His was the pattern of theirs, and they can but look for a risen life such as His was. He was the first-fruits, the first-born among many brethren. Where He is, there shall also His servant be.

(3) Hence St. Paul had but a single answer to the double question: "With what body did Christ rise?" and "With what body do Christians come from death?" He tells a parable, the meaning of which cannot be evaded. We sow seed in the ground. It contains in itself the principle of life; it casts off its first body and takes another. So also is the resurrection of the dead. The earthly body is laid in the grave of life. It, too, contains an unseen principle of life. That life, too, casts off the old and natural body, and takes another, a glorified and spiritual body. The body which is spiritual is that which is suited to the spirit world, as the natural body was fitted for a material world. The spiritual is not the natural sublimated, however, but a new creation. Flesh and blood cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. The natural body, with all the atoms composing it, belongs to the present natural order. A spiritual environment demands a spiritual body. And spirit is not atomic—or at any rate, St. Paul assumes that it is not.

(4) The power which raised Jesus Christ from the dead was the Holy Spirit of God. One writer declares that it was through the Eternal Spirit that Jesus offered His life while on earth without spot to God, and, in saying this, he only follows St. Paul in his declaration that He was marked out as the Son of God with power by the resurrection according to a Spirit of Holiness. The Holy Spirit given to Jesus Christ without measure was the efficient cause of His resurrection from the dead. Therefore it follows from the close similarity between



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the Head and the members that their resurrection is brought about by the same Holy Spirit. "If the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you."

(5) The next step in St. Paul's teaching is that in which his religious originality and depth of thought are seen most clearly, and, indeed, stand out before us with startling freshness. That is perhaps the reason why this doctrine of his has fallen into the background and been overlooked. Materially minded people want materialistic images which they can grasp readily, and about which they may give a logical account. But religious truths by their very nature are too august and too evasive for logic. They are of Heaven, and logic is of earth only. Now the doctrine that the resurrection means the resumption of the old body which death had corrupted is a materialistic conception. That is why it is so popular. But it is not the doctrine of St. Paul. He was far more concerned with religion than with metaphysics or theories of being. That is why all he says about the resurrection moves strictly within the atmosphere of religion.

He says—and let this be weighed, marked, and learned—that he has little interest in death and resurrection from the mere standpoint of physical existence. It was not the *physical* death and resurrection of Christ on which he based the Christians' faith and hope, but His *spiritual* death and resurrection. But then you cannot limit these latter to the tragedy of Mount Calvary and that which immediately followed. Christ's death was a death to sin, and that was in process from the first. Christ's resurrection was a rising superior to sin, and that, too, took place from the first. Christ died unto sin throughout His early life, and He died finally, once and for all, when on the Cross He rose superior to the last and most bitter temptation of all. Every time that temptation came to Him—and temptation came to Him continuously—He mastered it by the power of the Spirit of God, of that risen life which was hid in God His Father. Calvary and the great forty days were no new elements in His life, but its crown and its reward.

(6) From this follows the practical bearing for us of Christ's death and resurrection. When we look on Him and are touched



by our sinfulness, and come to God, and determine to live the life of faith, we die to sin as Christ died to it; we rise to newness of life as Christ rose to it; we are buried with Him, and, like Him, become alive unto God. The sole difference—and it is immense—is that we have a past to undo, and He had none.

(7) Now we can see what St. Paul taught about our resurrection body. It is fashioned for us by holy living. It is already in course of formation within. He that is leading the spiritual life is having prepared for him gradually a spiritual body. Then, when the “natural body” is finally cast aside, the glorious “spiritual body” will leap out, as the fitting organ of a soul which has become predominantly spiritual, and death will be swallowed up in life.

¶ The unique part of the Christian revelation is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who *forms* the Spiritual body, so that when the believer dies, or, more truly, awakes, he awakes after the likeness of the Lord, to co-operate with Him freely in redemptive love. I quite understand the quickening of our mortal bodies (Rom. viii. 2) to refer to this, the getting rid of that death or mortality which limits or imprisons us in this order of existence, by developing and perfecting the power of the incorruptible Seed of Life which brings us into living contact and consciousness with the Life of the Universe. *Then* the grub body is no longer wanted; like the husk in the seed, it has done its work in the early stages of growth, and now is put off as the butterfly puts off the chrysalis-shell, and as the materials of that body go to the churchyard to return into that which may through various modifications become part of another human earthly body.<sup>1</sup>

¶ Human nature, as its Creator made it, and maintains it wherever His laws are observed, is entirely harmonious. No physical error can be more profound, no moral error more dangerous, than that involved in the monkish doctrine of the opposition of body to soul. No soul can be perfect in an imperfect body; no body perfect without perfect soul. Every right action and true thought sets the seal of its beauty on person and face; every wrong action and foul thought its seal of distortion; and the various aspects of humanity might be read as plainly as a printed history, were it not that the impressions are so complex that it must always in some cases (and, in the present state of our knowledge, in all cases) be impossible to decipher them completely. Nevertheless, the face of a consistently just and of a

<sup>1</sup> R. W. Corbet, *Letters from a Mystic of the Present Day*, 183.

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consistently unjust person, may always be rightly distinguished at a glance; and if the qualities are continued by descent through a generation or two, there arises a complete distinction of race. Both moral and physical qualities are communicated by descent, far more than they can be developed by education (though both may be destroyed by want of education); and there is as yet no ascertained limit to the nobleness of person and mind which the human creature may attain, by persevering observance of the laws of God respecting its birth and training.<sup>1</sup>

¶ In 1865 Lord Francis Douglas, while climbing Mont Blanc, slipped and fell to his death. His body could not be found, and it was supposed that it had fallen into the bed of the glacier. According to computations based on careful estimates from experience, the glacier should have discharged the body at the foot of the mountain in the summer of 1905. All that summer, the aged mother of Lord Francis was there watching and waiting for the body of her boy, but the body, to her bitter disappointment, did not appear. Broken-hearted, she had been waiting for years just to get a glimpse of the scarred face and mangled body she loved, and to lay its dust to rest. She would have been comforted if only that had been allowed her. But there is an infinitely better thing which Christ has prepared; not the dull dust and broken body released from the icy embrace of the cruel glacier, but the living, glorified personality in the bosom of the Father's love; not for one hurried, agonizing glimpse as the heart sobs over the memory of what it has lost; but for ever and ever in the fellowship of heaven.<sup>2</sup>

### 2. What are the consequences of Christ's Resurrection?

(1) *It gives us a complete Gospel.*—A dead Christ annihilates the Gospel. "If Christ be not risen," says the Apostle, "our preaching," by which he means not the act but the substance of his preaching, "is vain"; or, as the word might be more accurately rendered, "empty." There is nothing in it; no contents. It is a blown bladder; nothing in it but wind. What was St. Paul's "preaching"? It all turned upon these points—that Jesus Christ was the Son of God; that He was Incarnate in the flesh of us men; that He died on the Cross for our offences; that He was raised again, and had ascended into Heaven, ruling the world and breathing His presence into believing hearts; and that He would come again to be our Judge. These were the elements

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin, *Munera Pulveris* (*Works*, xvii. 149).

<sup>2</sup> J. I. Vance, *Tendency*, 245.

of what St. Paul called "his gospel." He faces the supposition of a dead Christ, and he says, "It is all gone! It is all vanished into thin air. I have nothing to preach if I have not a Cross to preach which is man's deliverance from sin, because on it the Son of God hath died, and I know that Jesus Christ's sacrifice is accepted and sufficient, only because I have it attested to me in His rising again from the dead."

(2) A living Christ *gives faith something to lay hold of*.—The Apostle here in the context twice says, according to the Authorized Version, that a dead Christ makes our faith "vain." But he really used two different words, the former of which is applied to "preaching," and means literally "empty," while the latter means "of none effect" or "powerless." So there are two ideas suggested here. The risen Christ puts some contents, so to speak, into our faith. Who can trust a *dead* Christ, or who can trust a *human* Christ? That would be as much a blasphemy as trusting any other man. It is only when we recognize Him as declared to be the Son of God, and that by the resurrection from the dead, that our faith has anything round which it can twine, and to which it can cleave. That living Saviour will stretch out His hand to us if we look to Him, and if I put my poor, trembling little hand up towards Him, He will bend to me and clasp it. You cannot exercise faith unless you have a risen Saviour, and unless you exercise faith in Him your lives are marred and sad.

(3) Again, a living Christ *destroys the dominion of sin*.—The first blessing which the believing soul receives through and from a risen Christ is deliverance from sin. If He whom we believed to be our sacrifice by His death and our sanctification by His life has not risen, then all which makes His death other than a martyr's vanishes, and with it vanish forgiveness and purifying. Only when we recognize that in His Cross, explained by His resurrection, we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins, and by the communication of the risen life from the risen Lord possess that new nature which sets us free from the dominion of our evil—only then is faith operative in setting us free from our sins.

(4) The resurrection was *the convincing proof that Christ's words were true, and that He was what He had claimed to be*.—He

Himself had on more occasions than one hinted that such proof was to be given. "Destroy this temple," He said, "and in three days I will raise it up." The sign which was to be given, notwithstanding His habitual refusal to yield to the Jewish craving for miracle, was the sign of the prophet Jonah. As he had been thrown out and lost for three days and nights, but had thereby only been forwarded in his mission, so our Lord was to be thrown out as endangering the ship, but was to rise again to fuller and more perfect efficiency. In order that His claim to be the Messiah might be understood, it was necessary that He should die; but in order that it might be believed, it was needful that He should rise.

(5) The resurrection of Christ holds a fundamental place in the Christian creed, because *by it there is disclosed a real and close connection between this world and the unseen, eternal world.*—There is no need now of argument to prove a life beyond; here is one who is in it. For the resurrection of Christ was not a return to this life, to its wants, to its limitations, to its inevitable close; it was a resurrection to a life for ever beyond death. Neither was it a discarding of humanity on Christ's part, a cessation of His acceptance of human conditions, a rising to some kind of existence to which man has no access. On the contrary, it was because He continued truly human that in human body and with human soul He rose to veritable human life beyond the grave. If Jesus rose from the dead, then the world into which He is gone is a real world, in which men can live more fully than they live here. If He rose from the dead, then there is an unseen Spirit mightier than the strongest material powers, a God who is seeking to bring us out of all evil into an eternally happy condition. Quite reasonably is death invested with a certain majesty, if not terror, as the mightiest of physical things. There may be greater evils; but they do not affect all men but only some, or they debar men from certain enjoyments and a certain kind of life but not from all. But death shuts men out from everything with which they have here to do, and launches them into a condition of which they know absolutely nothing. Any one who conquers death and scatters its mystery, who shows in his own person that it is innocuous, and that it actually betters our condition, brings us light that reaches us from no other



quarter. And He who shows this superiority over death in virtue of a moral superiority, and uses it for the furtherance of the highest spiritual ends, shows a command over the whole affairs of men which makes it easy to believe He can guide us into a condition like His own. As St. Peter affirms, it is by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead we are begotten again unto a lively hope.

¶ There is a beautiful sonnet of Petrarch, who sees Laura in heaven amongst the angels; she walks amongst them, but from time to time turns her head and looks behind and seems to be waiting for him:

Wherefore I raise to heaven my heart and mind  
Because I hear her bid me only haste.<sup>1</sup>

¶ The history of the three anthems which are chosen in place of the Venite for matins on Easter morning (1. Cor. v. 7, 8; Rom. vi. 9-11; 1. Cor. xv. 20-22) well illustrates the care taken by the compilers of the Prayer-book to make it reflect the great doctrinal lessons of the sacred year. They do not stand to-day in their original form, but there can be no question of the greater fitness and beauty of the present arrangement. The first anthem was inserted last, and did not appear till 1662, at the last revision of the Prayer-book at the Savoy Conference. But, as an Easter anthem, it was already very old, for part of it had appeared as such in the Antiphony of Gregory the Great. It had also been read in the Epistle for the second communion on Easter Day in 1549, in the first Prayer-book of Edward vi., when provision was made for a Collect, Epistle, and Gospel at two communions. These were ordered to be used as the special features for Easter Tuesday and for the first Sunday after Easter, though this arrangement was abolished in the second Prayer-book of Edward vi. in 1552.

The second anthem is much older. It formed a part of a short service which was prefixed in the Sarum Breviary to the ordinary matins as a special feature for Easter Day. The exact words used were as follows: "Christ rising again from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He liveth He liveth unto God." And this had been followed by the refrain, "Alleluia, Alleluia." In the Sarum Breviary the versicles and response followed: "The Lord rose from the sepulchre: who for us hung upon the tree. Alleluia." To these succeeded the following beautiful collect: "O God, who for us didst suffer Thy Son to endure the yoke of the Cross, that Thou

<sup>1</sup> Mandell Creighton, *Life and Letters*, ii. 168.

mightest drive away from us the power of the enemy; grant to us, Thy servants, that we may always live in the joys of His Resurrection." In the Prayer-book of 1549 the same anthem was placed at the head of the short introductory service therein framed before matins for Easter Day. Next to it was added the present third anthem, each being followed by the word "Alleluia" twice after the first, once after the second anthem. Two versicles then followed thus: "Show forth to all nations the glory of God . . . and among all people His wonderful works." Then the following exquisite collect was added, instead of the collect given above: "O God, who for our redemption didst give Thine only Begotten Son to the death of the Cross, and by His glorious Resurrection hast delivered us from the power of our enemy; Grant us so to die daily from sin that we may evermore live with Him in the joy of His resurrection, through the same Christ our Lord."

A further change took place in 1552 in the second Prayer-book of Edward VI. The two anthems were shifted from the head of the service for matins to their present place before the Venite. The Alleluias were omitted, and also the special versicles and the collect just quoted. And thus it continued till 1662, when, as we have seen, the first anthem was added. These changes will serve to bring home to our minds the special importance which attaches to these three anthems in their present position in the service. From the date of the Sarum Breviary in 1085 down to the present time, that is, over a period of eight hundred years, one or other or all of them have stood at the head of the Easter service, where, in the old days, until their change of position in 1552, they were originally a sort of Introit, a "processional hymn," which ushered in the worship of the Queen of Festivals. Indeed, the one alteration which we might well wish had not been made is the shifting of that position (so as to make them the mere alternative of the Invitatory Psalm) to a place in the service where their significance is almost lost in the glad festival psalms which immediately follow. Clearly they were intended all along, and are intended still, to strike the keynote of praise for the whole festival, and to sound forth its doctrinal and practical characteristics.

When we study them carefully this impression of their importance and significance is deepened. For all the great essential thoughts of Eastertide are in germ here, and three chief aspects stand prominently forward. They offer us on the morning of the Resurrection a full and complete Christ, the perfect answer to the needs and desires of fallen man. Our souls require above all things mercy to cover the past only too stained with sin. We find that offered us here through the Cross in



Christ our Passover. They yearn for the secret of spiritual power in the present, that sin already forgiven may have now no dominion over us. It is laid bare to us in Christ our life, in and through whom we too, reckoning ourselves "dead indeed unto sin," are "alive unto God" with the power of an endless life within. But our souls have also "keen desire," which finds expression in "earnest prayer and strong" for fellowship in a life beyond the grave, which shall restore to us the losses which the havoc of death has made in this. It is offered us in Christ our first-fruits, our promise, and the first-fruits of them that sleep, the key to an everlasting destiny. Thus, as the first anthem proclaimed the Crucified Christ as the ground of our *justification*, so the second anthem extols the Risen Christ as the secret of our *sanctification*, whilst the third anthem adores the triumphant Christ as the pledge of our *glorification*. What a magnificent revelation of the Alpha and Omega of Grace, who once, as in the first anthem, "was dead," now "lives for aye," and, better still, "hath the keys of hell and of death"! A risen Christ in strong and glorious relation to the past, the present, and the future of His redeemed ones, whom He hath "ransomed from the power of the enemy." *The Lord for me*: the secret of my pardon and my peace. *The Lord in me*: the secret of my holiness and victory. *The Lord with me*: the sure pledge of immortality, the "first-fruits" of them that sleep, the sheaf of early ripe corn waved at the Passover Feast in the temple of God as the promise of the

holy harvest-field,  
Which will all its full abundance  
At His second coming yield.

A Christ who is the object of adoring *faith*, "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." A Christ who is the motive power of *love*, who died and rose that "they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." A Christ who is the inspiration of heavenly *hope*, "who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him." Thus, if in the first anthem we specially dwell upon the victorious work of Jesus whereby the curse is removed, in the second anthem we are contemplating the ever living person of Christ in whom the blessing is restored, and in the third anthem we are echoing the rapturous music of Heaven, the song of the redeemed before the throne, which tells of the consummated Kingdom of Christ in whom Heaven itself is given

to the sons of men. Or, in other words, if in the first anthem we realize the guilt of sin atoned for by the Paschal Lamb, in the second we joyfully celebrate the power of sin crushed through the overcoming life within, and in the third we foretell the result of sin cancelled through the second Adam, who is "the Lord from heaven." All the three groups of thought find special allusion in the collect already quoted, which, from 1549 to 1552, followed two of these anthems at the head of the Easter morning service.<sup>1</sup>

### III.

#### THE PROMISE OF THE RESURRECTION.

"The first-fruits of them that are asleep."

The word "first-fruits" has a very definite signification in the Scriptures. There was a commandment given to the people of Israel that when they entered into the possession of the Land of Promise, they were not to begin harvest till they had first cut down a sheaf and presented or waved it before the Lord, in thanksgiving as well as in token that they and their harvests belonged to the Lord. The circumstances connected with the offering of the first-fruits are singularly suggestive of a higher symbolism. The sheaf was offered on the third day after the Passover. In this we see Christ, the sheaf of first-fruits, rising from the dead on the third day after His Passion, the first begotten from the dead the precursor of the harvest yet to come, the proof, pledge, and pattern of the resurrection of the just.

1. The resurrection of Christ is *the proof of the resurrection of them that are asleep*. When a farmer holds in his hand the first ripe sheaf of corn he has in possession an unassailable proof that he will have a harvest. More decisive and satisfactory evidence to that effect could not be desired by any reasonable man. Long before this time the precious seed had been cast into the dark bosom of the earth, when no tokens were visible that nature possessed any power of life. But in due season the sun began to warm the sleeping world, the gentle rain from heaven fell upon the place beneath, and the winds of the south whispered of a

<sup>1</sup> T. A. Gurney.

coming revival. Soon there was first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear, and then the first ripe sheaf telling of a harvest at hand. Christ is the first-fruits of them that sleep, the infallible proof that we shall have a resurrection from the gloomy winter of death.

Think of one who never in his life saw a harvest or spoke with any one to whom it was a familiar thing, who was well acquainted with sowing, but an utter stranger to reaping. Suppose, further, that not one harvest had ever gladdened the earth in any corner of it, and you have some idea of the state of knowledge necessarily possessed by men of old, concerning the rising again from the dead. Men had been but too familiar with sowing; from age to age they had committed to the earth all that remained of the fondest, the fairest, the best that they had. "Earth had been sown thick with graves," but there had been no harvest; none had ever been seen to return from the "dark portal, the goal of all mortal." Earth had swallowed up an immeasurable quantity of seed without showing any symptom of spring-time or harvest. We need not wonder that the Old Testament gives little light on the great rising again of the people of God. The Psalms and the Prophets occasionally show that there was light, and they may have had more than we can see in their records of the old days; but their light must have been dim and uncertain, seeing that none had ever risen from the dead to die no more. Enoch and Elijah were removed from the world in a mysterious way; they never looked upon the pale messenger, and their feet never touched the cold waters of the border land; but none of the sons of mortal men had ever risen from the grave to immortality.

Before the resurrection of Christ there had been instances of what is popularly termed "resurrection," as in the case of Lazarus and others whom Christ raised from the dead. In the Old Testament period, also, there had been similar cases, as in the history of Elijah and Elisha. Had the resurrection of Christ been like these earlier "resurrections," as we call them, simply the return of the spirit to the waiting body, and a mere reviving and continuance of the interrupted life, it is hard to see truth in the terms frequently applied to Christ as "*the firstborn from the dead*" (Col. i. 18), "*the firstborn of the dead*" (Rev. i. 5), "*the firstfruits*" (1 Cor. xv. 20, 23). We recognize the appropriate-

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ness of such terms to Christ only when we perceive that His reappearance within the circle of the friends who had buried Him was not on a level with that of Lazarus, but in a higher mode of life than that which He had quitted. In Lazarus we behold simply the *reanimation* of the natural body, and the resumption of the fleshly life. In Christ we behold resurrection in the spiritual body, and assumption of the life of the world to come. This is fully demonstrated by the facts given in the Gospel record, and this is required by the exceptional pre-eminence which the New Testament accords to Christ's rising from the dead. But one instance of that which is indeed the resurrection has been vouchsafed to our knowledge, as a sure pledge of that which is to come. This is manifest in the risen Christ, who thereby "was declared to be the Son of God with power" (Rom. i. 4). All the partial resemblances to this which are found on record are cases of mere resuscitation or reanimation.

Not as a fallen stone,  
Abiding where it hath been flung,  
Did Christ remain the dead among,  
But sprang from Hades' deep invisible zone,  
As the corn springs from where it has been thrown!

Not, as at Nain of yore  
The young man rose to die again,  
Did He resume the haunts of men,  
But closed behind Him Death's reluctant door  
And triumphed on to live for evermore!

Not, as we spend our days,  
Subject to sorrows, pains, and fears,  
Does He persist a Man of tears;  
Henceforth He feels no touch of our decays,  
But inexpressive joy in all His ways!

Not for Himself alone  
He fought, and won that glorious life:  
For us He conquered in the strife,  
That we might make His victory our own,  
And rise with Him before the Father's Throne!

Thus hath the Saviour brought  
 Our immortality to light!  
 O may He tarry in our sight,  
 That, clinging fast to Him with every thought,  
 We may partake the triumph He has wrought!<sup>1</sup>

¶ In a sheltered corner of my Manse garden stands a common red flowering-currant bush. I suppose it has no value at all for anybody but me. But I would not exchange it for all the roses in the Major's fine domain across the road. For year after year it gives me the first news of Spring. Just after the New Year has come in, I begin to watch it,—long before anything else in the garden has stirred. And some still, quiet morning it has its message for me. There is quite a distinct new shade of green on the buds. The wind is bitterly cold, and snow showers are about. Everything else in the garden is cold and dead. But it has risen. And the rest will follow in God's good time.<sup>2</sup>

2. The resurrection of Christ is *the pledge of our resurrection*.—We need more than simple proof, however clear, that a resurrection of man is possible. We require a pledge of its certainty before we can taste strong consolation. How can one man's rising give assurance that we shall rise? Did He not rise from the dead purely in virtue of His power and Godhead? What more does that prove than that He was able to rise because He was the strong Son of God? How shall we, who are certainly not strong, be able to follow His example? Is not the proverb, that what man has done man may do, false on the very face of it? Who shall say that the doings of the man Christ Jesus are the just criterion of what may be expected from man? If the Lord had been related to us in the same way as we are related to our fellows, and in no other way, His rising would have proved the possibility of a resurrection, but nothing more. If He had been only our Brother, He could not have been the first-fruits of them that slept, or the pledge of their rising again. But while He was truly our Brother, He was also the Everlasting Father, the representative Head of the race of men.

Luther says: "Our most merciful Father, seeing us to be overwhelmed and oppressed by the curse of the law, and so to be holden under the same that we could never be delivered from it by our own power, sent His holy Son into the world, and laid

<sup>1</sup> G. T. S. Farquhar.

<sup>2</sup> Archibald Alexander.



upon Him the sins of all men, saying, 'Be Thou Peter that denier; Paul that blasphemer and cruel persecutor; David that adulterer; that sinner which did eat the apple in Paradise; that thief which hanged upon the cross; and, briefly, be Thou the person which hath committed the sins of all men. See, then, that Thou pay and satisfy for them.' . . . Now cometh the law, and saith, 'I find Him a sinner, and I see no sins else but on Him; therefore let Him die upon the cross,' and so he setteth upon Him and killeth Him." The old order changeth, ever giving place to the latest born, and Luther's form of sound words is now obsolete, just as our little systems will have their day and cease to be; but the immortal soul of vicarious sacrifice is unchanged. It is unalterably and eternally true that Christ, as the Head of His people, and made one with them, was made a curse, was made sin, took upon Himself all their responsibilities, and fully discharged them in dying. When He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father His reappearance on earth, or reconstitution as a man, was nothing less than God's pledge that every liability had been settled, and that a similar resurrection belonged to them who should be found united to the Head that had suffered in their room and stead. The solidarity of our race in ruin is the groundwork of its solidarity in redemption; in a true sense, all Christ's people rose up with Him on the third day, according to the Scriptures.

Little one, you must not fret  
That I take your clothes away;  
Better sleep you so will get,  
And at morning wake more gay—  
Saith the children's mother.

You I must unclothe again,  
For you need a better dress;  
Too much worn are body and brain;  
You need everlastingness—  
Saith the heavenly father.

I went down death's lonely stair;  
Laid my garments in the tomb;  
Dressed again one morning fair;  
Hastened up, and hied me home—  
Saith the elder brother.



Then I will not be afraid  
 Any ill can come to me;  
 When 'tis time to go to bed,  
 I will rise and go with thee—  
 Saith the little brother.<sup>1</sup>

3. The resurrection of Christ is *the pattern of our resurrection*.—The first sheaf is a specimen, type, example, or pattern of the harvest at hand. If the first fruits be poor and withered, the after fruits will be similar; if rich, full, and perfect, the harvest expected will be excellent. When we read that the Lord shall raise our vile bodies at the last, so that they may be fashioned like His own body of glory, we have at once a type of the glorified humanity that shall stand on the earth at the last day. He remained with us for forty days after He had risen, in order to give us light concerning the wonderful transformation.

(1) The condition of the spirit after death and resurrection is clearly seen in that light. Full and perfect peace was the atmosphere in which the spirit of the great Redeemer lived and moved after He had conquered death and the grave. The memory that He had of the past was clear and distinct, but not painful in the smallest degree; He contemplated the whole of His life in the past as a finished work, an arduous task accomplished, a hard-won battle ended—the whole to look back upon as a joy for evermore. His heart was the same, as kind and thoughtful as ever, and He resumed companionship with His friends very much as if there had been no cross and no grave. We hope to be like Him in all that pertained to His holy and happy humanity; our spirits hushed to rest, and blest in the possession of His peace; our minds unvexed and untortured by the element of pain that troubles our memories here, and poisons our joy when we recall the past. We look to have, like Him, the same sweet intercourse with former friends of mortal years, and to retain our old familiar, and well-known personality, set free from sin.

(2) The condition of the glorified body is unveiled in the light of His forty days' sojourn after the resurrection. His was most distinctly a real body, and not a phantom without substance, to mock the gazer's sight. So real was He to the disciples that, after the first natural start of terror, they fell easily into their

<sup>1</sup> George MacDonald, *Poetical Works*, i. 348.

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old ways with Him, and did not seem to feel it a strange thing to walk and talk with One in a glorified state. He was easily recognized by them, for His body had the well-known marks and signs by which they were able to identify Him at once. He showed them His hands and His feet—

The arm which held the children, the pale hand  
That gently touched the eyelids of the blind  
And opened passive to the cruel nail.

They could not fail to remember every line of His blessed face; He had been away only for a little while, and it was easy to know Him after the short grief and pain. The body of the Lord was essentially a spiritual one withal; not any longer confined to the conditions of time, space, and matter, but supreme in power over the world of sense; able to enter a fast-closed room, and to leave it at will; to become visible or invisible as He wished, known or unknown—His was a body that obeyed every wish of the Spirit.

¶ I sent the Queen (January 1885) a little book which contained some verses due to a great sorrow of my own. In her reply she said, "You surely do *not think*, as it would a little seem from the beautiful poem, *My Yew Tree*, that our dear ones *sleep awhile*, and that their *bodies* are to rise again? I thought you wrote to me once you thought, as I always think one feels one *must*, that the spirit is *at once* free in death, and that you were inclined to believe in a spiritual body *within* our present one?"

To this I replied that the Queen was quite right in supposing that I was in sympathy with the view that the "spiritual body" (as St. Paul calls it) is set free at death. I have never been able to feel that the supposed long sleep and time of unconsciousness is taught us in the New Testament. The phrases I had used in my verses were used in the sense that to us our dear ones seemed to sleep; and that what I had tried to sing was a kind of triumph song, telling the cold earth that her seeming victory was no victory at all.<sup>1</sup>

Death and darkness, get you packing,  
Nothing now to man is lacking;  
All your triumphs now are ended,  
And what Adam marr'd is mended;

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Boyd Carpenter, *Some Pages of My Life*, 287.

Graves are beds now for the weary,  
Death a nap, to wake more merry;  
Youth now, full of pious duty,  
Seeks in thee for perfect beauty;  
The weak and aged, tired with length  
Of days, from Thee look for new strength;  
And infants with Thy pangs contest  
As pleasant as if with the breast.  
Then unto Him, who thus hath thrown  
Even to contempt Thy kingdom down,  
And by His blood did us advance  
Unto His own inheritance;  
To Him be glory, power, praise,  
From this unto the last of days.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Henry Vaughan.



THE CHRISTIAN KNIGHT.

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## THE CHRISTIAN KNIGHT.

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all that ye do be done in love.—1 Cor. xvi. 13, 14.

1. THIS passage occurs at the end of St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthian Church, in which he has been reproving them for their divisions, and for the irregularities that have grown up among them. At the end of the Epistle, the Apostle has finished his hortatory remarks, and is adding a few personal messages, and giving directions about some practical points of Church administration, when, having occasion to mention the name of Apollos, he seems to have been reminded afresh of the irregularities he has been writing to censure. He thinks of the Corinthians and their errors; he thinks of their unstable minds, of their wandering imaginations; he thinks sadly how little impression his advice will produce; he doubts if he has spoken clearly enough, forcibly enough, if he has said all that can be said; then, as if to make sure, as if to clench his other precepts, as if to sum up in a few words all he has to say, as if to give the Corinthians some plain advice that they may easily keep in their memory, he chooses these few incisive words to serve as mottoes to recur to his hearers' minds in vacant hours: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all that ye do be done in love."

2. The language is military. St. Paul had never seen an engagement, but he was familiar with barrack life, and one can imagine that there were aspects of that life that charmed him; its simple and absolute devotion, its discipline, its *esprit de corps*, the two elements of its might, unity and obedience, and the heroic qualities which were begotten of its dangers and its laurels. When he borrows a figure from the guardroom or the battlefield, the fidelity and spirit with which he uses it show that the allusion

is not a mere grace of style; it is a vital constituent of the thought. To him Christian life was a contest, and he transfers to Christian action the nomenclature of camps.

There are five precepts. And the fifth, though it is found in a separate verse, should on no account be left out. First there is the introductory call, Be awake! Then there are two pairs: Be godly, and be manly; be strong, and be tender.

- I. Be awake—"Watch ye."
- II. { Be godly—"Stand fast in the faith."  
Be manly—"Quit you like men."
- III. { Be strong—"Be strong."  
Be tender—"Let all that ye do be done in love."

## I.

### BE AWAKE.

"Watch ye."

Be awake, lie not in slumber, that is the first requisite for all action; break the bands of sleep and indolence, or you can do nothing.

The word means one of two things certainly, probably both—Keep awake, and keep your eyes open. Our Lord used the same metaphor very frequently, but with a special significance. On His lips it generally referred to the attitude of expectation of His coming in judgment. St. Paul sometimes uses the figure with the same application; but here, distinctly, it has another. There is the military idea underlying it. What will become of an army if the sentries go to sleep? And what chance will a Christian man have of doing his *devoir* against his enemy, unless he keeps himself awake, and keeps himself alert? Watchfulness, in the sense of always having eyes open for the possible rush down upon us of temptation and evil, is no small part of the discipline and the duty of the Christian life.

#### i. Wakefulness.

1. Many men have never awakened at all; they know not what life is; they know not what the world in which they seem

to move may be; they have never raised their sleepy eyes from the dreary round of selfish enjoyment, as they call it, in which their time is spent. To lead an aimless, useless life, with mind enfeebled and faculties undeveloped, the whole nature enervated through want of exercise, this is the most awful prospect any man can be called upon to face.

2. There are two main causes at the bottom of this terrible vice.

(1) In the first place there is the cold, deliberate selfishness that refuses to move beyond itself, will not be troubled, has no sympathies, with any duty outside itself, is determined to consult always its own comfort in the way which comes most easy and lies nearest at hand. A man who is indolent from this reason is the most perfectly unlovely character that can be found, and the number of such tends to increase with our national wealth and prosperity. Such a man knows that life is likely to be tolerably comfortable for himself, he knows that he is free from the stern hand of daily necessity, and so he deliberately purposes to get the utmost out of what he has, he shuts the door against all high aims, for they might give him trouble; knowledge he despises and takes in its place a low selfish cunning; his fellow-men he estimates solely as they contribute to his own enjoyment; he will do nothing he can help; why should he? He will go on peaceably through life; for what can come to disturb him if he is only reasonably prudent?

(2) But indolence comes from another cause—from thoughtless feebleness rather than low selfishness. A feebly indolent man knows dimly that life has a meaning, has duties. He believes somehow that there is a God who judges the world, that he himself has an immortal soul, and an account to give one day—believes it somehow, but believes it sleepily—believes it so that if he were awakened and formally asked these questions, he would give formally proper answers, but does not believe it in such a way that the truths to which he confesses take any real hold upon his life. He believes that life has a purpose, but that it need not be realized just yet. He grants that man is responsible for his own character, but then the fact that he wastes in idleness the precious years of opening manhood need not

particularly influence him. He grants that bad habits are easily acquired, but there is no fear of his own actions going so far as to form habits. He admits that it is better to be wise than to be ignorant, but thinks that knowledge will come to him through society, through free intercourse with others, rather than by the old-fashioned method of intellectual labour and honest thought.

¶ He wakes in the night, and hears one of his Lovedale boys on watch, "pacing his round with his rifle on his shoulder, singing low and sweetly, and apparently much to his heart's content, one of Sankey's hymns, 'Jesus loves me, even me.' He did not know that I was stirring." This singing watchman was Shadrack Ngunane, one of the Lovedale volunteers, whom Stewart, by an act of grace, had allowed to remain in Lovedale after a grave offence. "He has been as busy and useful," Stewart adds, "as a white man could have been, always well, always cheerful, always ready for everything." The picture of this once wild Kafir, formerly rather troublesome, now cheerfully keeping his midnight watch in this fashion and on such a venturesome journey, is one I shall not forget. It made me hope for the day when out of the regions we are now in there will be many who will prove themselves as worthy of the labour bestowed on them as this lad has done, and help to convey the Gospel still farther on. Day or night I never found my Kafir friend sleeping when he ought to be waking, or elsewhere than at the post of duty.<sup>1</sup>

## ii. Watchfulness.

1. Watchfulness means more than being awake. It is concentrated attention in wakefulness. It springs from the conviction of danger, it is sustained by the responsibility of duty. It is one of those positions which are restricted to the individual himself. Watchfulness cannot be transferred: it cannot even be distributed. You cannot say with perfect accuracy *we* watch; it must always be, *I* watch. If there be many watchmen, the security of the guard is not in the unity of the number, as it would be in repelling an assault, but in covering every position of possible surprise by individual and responsible vigilance. The watchman for the time being personifies the army to which he belongs. He commands because he protects every man and every weapon and arm of the service. His first and main qualification is a knowledge and persuasion of the danger which has made him a watchman.

<sup>1</sup> J. Wells, *Stewart of Lovedale*, 135.

¶ “I recently visited the Heights of Abraham,” said a friend, “and looking down those precipitous cliffs which make that the strongest natural citadel in America, I was amazed that Wolfe and his English forces were able to capture it. Speaking to a guardsman, I said, ‘It would seem as if a band of schoolboys might have held this fort against an army; how did it happen that the French were defeated?’ The guard replied, ‘Oh, the soldiers got careless, overconfident and pleasure-loving, and one dark night while they were off guard, the citadel was taken.’”<sup>1</sup>

2. One part of that watchfulness consists in exercising a very rigid and a very constant and comprehensive scrutiny of our motives. For there is no way by which evil creeps upon us so unobserved as when it slips in at the back door of a specious motive. Many a man contents himself with the avoidance of actual evil actions, and lets any kind of motives come in and out of his mind unexamined. It is all right to look after our *doings*, but as a man “*thinketh in his heart*, so is he.” The good or the evil of anything that I do is determined wholly by the motive with which I do it. And we are a great deal too apt to palm off deceptions on ourselves to be certain that our motives are right, unless we give them a very careful and minute scrutiny.

¶ We should establish a rigid examination for applicants for entrance, and make quite sure that each that presents itself is not a wolf in sheep’s clothing. Make them all bring out their passports. Let every vessel that comes into your harbour remain isolated from all communication with the shore until the health officer has been on board and given a clean bill. “Watch ye”; for yonder, away in the dark, in the shadow of the trees, the black masses of the enemy are gathered, and a midnight attack is but too likely to bring a bloody awakening to a camp full of sleepers.<sup>2</sup>

3. We have three things to guard—God’s honour, God’s property, and God’s truth.

(1) First, we are on guard for God’s *honour*.—How often men fail in this. How constantly we hear God’s Name, as it were, dragged in the dust. Swearing is so common that people often use such language without realizing that they are sinning against God. The words come to their lips so naturally that they do not even think about their meaning; and the man who does not use them

<sup>1</sup> E. J. Hardy.

<sup>2</sup> A. Maclaren.



becomes sometimes an object of surprise, if not of ridicule, amongst his mates. Nevertheless, the true soldier of Christ must brave this, for he is on guard for the honour of his King. If he is afraid to stand alone in leaving such words out of his talk, he is failing in his duty. If it is noticed, so much the better. Others see that he is not ashamed to show his colours. If he stands firm, they will in time grow to respect him for it; for deep down in the heart of the greatest blackguard there is generally admiration for a brave man who will stick to what is right, come what may.

¶ A smartly dressed railway guard was bustling about his work on a platform, with a pretty rose in his buttonhole. A man, more than half tipsy, came lurching past, snatched the rose from the guard's buttonhole, and flung it under the train, and then chuckled in his drunken fashion. The guard's face flushed red, but without a word he turned away. As he passed, a man complimented him and said, "You took that splendidly." The guard said, "I am on duty, sir."<sup>1</sup>

(2) Secondly, we are on guard for God's *property*.—A soldier in the King's army is not his own. He has to go where he is ordered and stay where he is stationed. And more than this. Not long ago one of our great generals pointed out in an address to the troops in India that men who do not try to keep themselves fit for service—efficient soldiers, as we call it—by clean, temperate lives, are defrauding the Service they have enlisted in. Every conscientious soldier, he said, should look at the question in that light. Even so the Christian soldier, who belongs to God, must try to be, in body and soul, an efficient member of the Service of the King of kings. In the words of the good old Church Catechism, he must "keep his body in temperance, soberness, and chastity."

¶ The soldiers insensibly forgot the virtues of their profession and contracted only the vices of civil life. They were either degraded by the industry of mechanic trades, or enervated by the luxury of baths and theatres. They soon became careless of their martial exercises, and curious in their diet and apparel. They loved downy beds and houses of marble; and their cups were heavier than their swords.<sup>2</sup>

(3) Lastly, we are on guard for God's *truth*.—A man can hardly mix among other men without hearing God's truth

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Traill.

<sup>2</sup> Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ii. 177.



assailed. There is a certain amount of unbelief; but perhaps less unbelief than carelessness and indifference that takes the form of unbelieving and even blasphemous talk. Men who like to be independent of religion themselves, who do not want to be bound by its laws, who find their own way more convenient than God's way, sometimes profess to be unbelievers. They are not honest unbelievers, but it suits them to talk unbelief; and they do their best to argue or laugh other men into the same way of thinking. Now against this kind of thing we must be on guard.<sup>1</sup>

See the world

Such as it is,—you made it not, nor I;  
 I mean to take it as it is,—and you,  
 Not so you'll take it,—though you get nought else.  
 I know the special kind of life I like,  
 What suits the most my idiosyncrasy,  
 Brings out the best of me and bears me fruit  
 In power, peace, pleasantness and length of days.  
 I find that positive belief does this  
 For me, and unbelief, no whit of this.  
 —For you, it does, however?—that, we'll try!<sup>2</sup>

## II.

### BE GODLY.

“Stand fast in the faith.”

“Stand fast in the faith,” stand upright in it, stand firm, stand boldly, be not tossed hither and thither, halt not between two opinions, be not half-hearted, know which master it is you are serving, and make up your mind clearly and definitely. “Stand fast in the faith.” Stand up like a man, and be ready to give an account of whose you are and what you believe; know what it is that you believe, whatever that may be; face it in its simple form and say if that is what you are prepared to act up to, and form your life by.

¶ One of the best known stories of the battle of Waterloo is this: One regiment was hard pressed, and suffering seriously from the enemy's fire. Presently Wellington rode up and called out: “Stand firm, Ninety-fifth! We must not be beaten. What

<sup>1</sup> A. Debenham, *On Guard*, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Browning, *Bishop Blougram's Apology*.

would they say in England?" Stand firm! It was an appeal to the manliness of his soldiers, and to their patriotism. The eye of their country was upon them. Whether charged by the cavalry or mowed down by the cannon, there must be no flinching. Stand firm! We must not be beaten!<sup>1</sup>

1. But what is this faith that we are commanded to stand fast in? It means our openness of soul to that eternal God who is our Father, yet our King; it means daily fellowship with that ever-living Christ who is our Brother, yet our Priest; it means a home within the soul to that eternal Spirit who is our Comforter, yet our Guide. Faith is the grasp of the spirit upon those eternal verities of God, which hold the spirit in time as if it were within eternity.

2. Intellectual activity is a great help to steadfastness in belief, but intellectual frivolity a grave danger. We would not make light of the difficulties that perplex the serious mind; what troubles it touches us all. To be forced to feel that the beliefs witnessed to by the Christian Church and accepted by the holy and the good cannot be believed, must ever be a heavy trial to the sober and grave mind. For if it doubts, it is not from inclination, but against it; not by preference, but from sheer conviction; and he is no friend to truth who does not respect the doubt of such a mind. But the number who belong to this class is never large. The longer we live, and the more we know of the intellectual tendencies that create conventional disbelief, the more we discover that fashion, temper, want of thought, and openness to superficial influences are more potent than grave and serious reason. Every age has its own peculiar tendencies to negation, and in our own day we may say that mental meddlesomeness, want of thought and plenitude of frivolous speech about the most awful themes are more fruitful causes of doubt, if doubt we may call it, than the questions of the critics, or the problems of philosophy and the schools.

The Apostle's exhortation must be interpreted by the help of the first verse of the preceding chapter: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel, . . . wherein ye stand"; and the Apostle proceeds to place in their order the truths which comprise the Gospel and the cardinal fact upon which they

<sup>1</sup> H. M. Butler, *Public School Sermons*, 173.

rest. The argument of the resurrection, which is the glory of this Epistle, was addressed to the sceptical spirit of the Corinthian Church. That spirit expressed itself in the question, "How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?" This is the popular mode of exclaiming against dogma. Its tone does not indicate the earnest inquiry of a child spirit, but the demand of an impatient and carping unbelief.

¶ This was the kind of battlefield to which Arnold would so often refer. To him the great curse of Public Schools, to be set against their noble powers for good, the great curse seemed to be—I quote his brilliant pupil and biographer—"the spirit" sometimes "there encouraged of combination, of companionship, of excessive deference to the public opinion prevalent in the school." Once he spoke of it in these stern words—are they even now obsolete?—"If the spirit of Elijah were to stand in the midst of us, and we were to ask him, 'What shall we do then?' his answer would be, 'Fear not, nor heed one another's voices, but fear and heed the voice of God only.'" And the favourite image of human goodness which always stood out before Arnold was the noble portrait of Abdiel in Milton—

The Seraph Abdiel, faithful found  
Among the faithless, faithful only he;  
Among innumerable false, unmoved,  
Unshaken, unseduced, untterrified,  
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal;  
Nor number nor example with him wrought  
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,  
Though single.<sup>1</sup>

3. This counsel to "stand fast" occurs no fewer than six times in the Epistles of St. Paul. The Apostle was evidently very anxious about his converts, that they should maintain Christian stability. If any one is to stand fast, two things are necessary,—namely, a foundation to stand upon, and strength to stand. It has been well said that "a man may have his feet on a rock, yet if he is weak as a rag, he cannot stand; and no matter how strong he is, if his feet are on quicksand, he cannot be stable."

(1) We have a sure *foundation* to stand upon: "the faith," that is, the truth,—*"as the truth is in Jesus."* We are to take our stand upon revealed truth, the truth of the Bible. Every

<sup>1</sup> H. M. Butler.

Christian ought firmly to hold that Christ Jesus is the Son of God; that He died upon the cross for our sins; that He rose again from the dead; that He now reigns in heaven; that He has sent His Holy Spirit into the world; and that He will Himself return at the last day to take all His people to be with Him in glory. While the believer is never to stand still as to growth and obedience, he is always to "stand fast" as to right principles. He is to continue firm with regard to everything that is true and just and good. He is to stand fast in the three abiding graces—"faith, hope, love."

(2) But not only has the Christian a sure ground to stand upon; he has also *strength* to stand. Some men are stronger than others in body, in mind, in affections, in will; but the strength that is required in order to "stand fast in the faith" is not one's own. It comes from the Lord Jesus. It is His gift to His people. The Apostle says, "Stand fast in the Lord," because the Christian is already "in Christ," and the whole secret of spiritual strength consists in union with Him. If we would stand fast, we must "abide in him."

¶ In the Highlands of Scotland there are two bold projecting crags or headlands, some thirty-five miles apart, both of which are called Craigellachie. The one is at Aviemore on the south, and the other near Aberlour on the north. The swift river Spey flows at the foot of both; and the two Craigellachies form the southern and northern boundaries of Strathspey, the land of the Grants. And what used to be long ago the war-cry of the clan Grant, which was sent from Castle Grant at Grantown with "the fiery cross" all through the strath? It was these words: "Stand fast, Craigellachie!" A war-cry this, as John Ruskin has said, full of "deep wells of feeling and thought," full of "the love of the native land, and the assurance of faithfulness to it." The repetition of these words out in India by Highland soldiers from Strathspey has been to them in the hour of battle, when they were fighting beside Indian palaces and temples, like a breath of the Scottish heather or a whisper of the birches and pines: "Stand fast, Craigellachie!" But the Christian warrior has a still grander and more inspiring war-cry: "Stand fast in the faith!" "Stand fast in the Lord!"<sup>1</sup>

4. How is it that so few Christian men seem to possess this true courage, this standing fast in the faith? Is it not because

<sup>1</sup> C. Jordan.

they are not rooted and grounded sufficiently in Christ Himself as the fulness of their redemption? Is it not because they have not embraced the faith with all their heart and mind; because they stand wavering on the threshold of the fortress, and have never really entered it? Is it not because they have not thoroughly apprehended God's purposes regarding them; are not yet satisfied that they are His and He is theirs? because they have never yet felt with deep and living conviction, that He is for them and nothing can be against them, that they were sent here to do His work, and till that work is done, no raging of the enemy can prevail? Is it not because they have not as yet acquired a distinct view of that enemy, and know not his devices; have not learned the signals of the two armies; have not sharply marked, in their mind's map, the frontiers of the kingdoms of darkness and of light? Is it not from want of the fulness of the faith itself, that we are so wavering and hesitating, so generally doing just what the world or the Church expects of us, and so rarely built up on Christ Himself, looking beyond men for our motives, for our plans, for our endurance?

¶ One of Bunyan's famous pilgrims, in the Second Part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, is "Mr. Stand-fast." This pilgrim is the last to be brought into the story, and the last also to cross the river of death. A true, strong, brave pilgrim was "Mr. Stand-fast." "Great-heart" and his company came upon him when he was on his knees in the Enchanted Ground, praying earnestly for help against the temptations of "Madam Bubble,"—that is, the world and its enchantments. By and by, when "Christiana" was bidding her friends farewell, she had messages to leave to some, and adieus to present to others; "but she gave 'Mr. Stand-fast' a ring," evidently as a token of her peculiar respect and affection. And when, at the very end of the allegory, the summons to cross the river came to "Mr. Stand-fast," it bore these touching and tender words: "For his Master is not willing that he should be so far from Him any longer." While this pilgrim was crossing, "there was a great calm at that time in the river"; so much so, that he stood for a time in mid-channel, and talked pleasantly to the convoy of friends who were watching him from the bank. He assured them that the river had now no terror for him. It had been his habit to "stand *fast*" amidst the dangers of the long pilgrimage; and therefore he could say, "*Now, methinks, I stand easy.*"



## III.

## BE MANLY.

“Quit you like men.”

1. We have all read, in history remote and recent, of some brief but spirit-stirring words of command, by which generals leading their armies into action at moments of critical emergency have nerved and invigorated for the conflict those who had long learned to rely upon the skill and courage of their leader. Some of these sayings have passed almost into proverbs; others have been treasured in family records, or enshrined in the pages of military or even Christian biography. Just such in its character is the admonition contained in the text. In the English version it consists of four words; in the original it is but one word.

¶ The words, “Stand fast in the faith, quit you like men,” in their original language, stand over the gateway of Selwyn College.

¶ I remember as if it were yesterday the horrid feeling when I knocked at his study door, the door through which I had often been taken when something naughty had been done, too bad for mother to punish for, but I had never felt quite so bad before. My knock was answered by a “Come in.” I entered, and father rose and drew me towards the window. Silently we stood there, and then strangest of all strange things, I noticed tears in his eyes. Then, when he put his hands on my shoulders, there was a break in his voice as he uttered the words, never to be forgotten: “Well, my son! You are the first to leave the home nest, and I have been praying God to give me the right words to say to you, and I think He has answered my prayer. God grant that you may *always try to be a man.*” I looked him in the face, eye to eye, as we had been taught to do, and thought to myself, he has begun. But he said no more.<sup>1</sup>

2. What does St. Paul mean when he exclaims to the Corinthian converts, “Quit you like men”? He means, not the conventional qualities on which this or that age may look with favour, but the highest qualities of which human nature looked at in its highest light is capable—put forth the manhood that is in you. How strange the contrast between the thoughts which that word

<sup>1</sup> George Clarke.



must have raised in the minds of St. Paul's hearers and those which it would have called up if uttered by one of their civil rulers. How different a thing had manhood become to the Christian from what it was before his conversion. The thought that their life had been lived by the Son of God, the thought that their nature had been worn by Christ, that their bodily form had been sanctified by God's indwelling presence, how overpowering must this have been to the first believers. They could have no doubt, no difficulty in life, when once they had believed. They knew in Him the greatness of their position, the source of their real strength. In following His life they knew wherein true manhood lay; they knew that it was not in the practice of the conventional virtues of the society around them, not in striking, brilliant exhibitions of their own great powers of mind or body, but in the simple daily life of industry and effort, that the perfection of human nature was to be found. This fact, this plain unmistakable truth, was stamped upon man's conscience by the human life and death of God's eternal Son. They need not go out of the world to find in solitude, in asceticism, in contemplation, their own "highest perfection," as the fanatics even among the Jews maintained. They need not strive laboriously, as the Greeks would teach them, to ascend the lofty heights of abstract thought, where the mind might look calmly down on human things, and rise above them into the region of the Divine. Nay, in order to gain their highest greatness, they need not even struggle with the keen strong weapons of the world's ambition to rise above their fellows, to do great exploits, to win great glory, to conquer and to rule, as they saw their Roman masters striving incessantly to do. Christ had revealed to His followers the sufficiency, the grandeur of common life; within the sphere of daily duty can the highest individual perfection be found.

This view of life lies at the bottom of what we call manliness of character. For it implies all those qualities which we most commonly attach to our idea of manliness. A man acting always from such a view is frank and straightforward, for he makes no false pretences and so has nothing to conceal. He is simple because he is too much in earnest to be lost in complexities and misunderstandings. He is fearless, for he is conscious of no aim of which he need be ashamed. He is brave, for whether he gain

or lose in each separate undertaking, in the end he cannot but win, for present failure must at least teach a broader wisdom for the future, and a more perfect sympathy with actual surroundings. He is sound and healthy, for he knows himself too well and deals with himself too honestly to leave any room for what is morbid or affected. He is strong, for he is self-controlled, at any moment ready to act decisively up to what he knows, without thinking that what he does is necessarily on that account the wisest and best course possible. He is enduring, for he can afford to wait, knowing that his aim is his own lasting development, not the production of immediate results, not the glory of present praise and honour.

¶ All right exercise of any human gift, so descended from the Giver of good, depends on the primary formation of the character of true manliness in the youth—that is to say, of a majestic, grave, and deliberate strength. How strange the words sound; how little does it seem possible to conceive of majesty, and gravity, and deliberation in the daily track of modern life. Yet, gentlemen, we need not hope that our work will be majestic if there is no majesty in ourselves. The word “manly” has come to mean practically, among us, a schoolboy’s character, not a man’s. We are, at our best, thoughtlessly impetuous, fond of adventure and excitement; curious in knowledge for its novelty, not for its system and results; faithful and affectionate to those among whom we are by chance cast, but gently and calmly insolent to strangers; we are stupidly conscientious, and instinctively brave, and always ready to cast away the lives we take no pains to make valuable, in causes of which we have never ascertained the justice.<sup>1</sup>

¶ In Drummond’s *Life of Charles A. Berry*, there is the following reminiscence by Mr. Holderness Gale, an intimate friend of Berry:—“One day I had been spending an hour or two with him, and we were leaving the Club together, he to go, I think, to Woodford. Our ways parted at the Club door, and when we reached it, he called to me to wait a minute while he claimed his bag. In those days, a member entering the Club might leave his bag with the hall porter, and this Berry had done. He described his bag as a square black one, with a round handle, and was handed one which was beautifully smooth and shone with unsullied varnish. ‘That’s not mine,’ said Berry; ‘mine is over there,’ and he pointed to another bag of the same shape, or rather

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin, *The Study of Architecture* (*Works*, xix. 32).

which *had* been of the same shape in its early days. When I saw it, the owner's slippers, and sundry other impedimenta, had destroyed its squareness, and the varnish had given way, here and there, in honourable scars of roughened brown leather. 'I suppose you thought that wasn't respectable enough for a parson,' said Berry, as the attendant gave the bag a dusting. 'Bless you, sir, we never thinks of you as a parson; we always thinks of you as a *man*,' was the reply. I never saw Berry more touched than at this spontaneous tribute."<sup>1</sup>

¶ Away back in the Middle Ages was a very beautiful and radiant thing named chivalry—a thing partly real and partly ideal, the ideal part of it being just as precious for us as the real part. Now, one great purpose lying at the root of chivalry was that of cultivating a fine and stately type of manhood; in fact, of breeding up the manliest race of men that had ever trod up and down in the world. And what was their notion of manliness—theirs, in that epoch of coarseness, and of animal lusts, and of violent lives? Listen. The finest dream of chivalry was embodied in that superb personage, King Arthur, and in the gorgeous knights who sat with him at the Round Table. And by what principles were their splendid lives controlled? Tennyson has told us, in the best English that has been written in our time—putting the testimony into the lips of King Arthur himself.

I was first of all the kings who drew  
 The knighthood-errant of this realm and all  
 The realms together under me, their Head,  
 In that fair Order of the Table Round,  
 A glorious company, the flower of men,  
 To serve as model for the mighty world,  
 And be the fair beginning of a time.  
 I made them lay their hands in mine and swear  
 To reverence the King, as if he were  
 Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,  
 To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,  
 To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,  
 To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,  
 To honour his own word as if his God's,  
 To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,  
 To love one maiden only, cleave to her,  
 And worship her by years of noble deeds,  
 Until they won her; for indeed I knew  
 Of no more subtle master under heaven

<sup>1</sup> Charles A. Berry, 274.

Than is the maiden passion for a maid,  
Not only to keep down the base in man,  
But teach high thought, and amiable words,  
And courtliness, and the desire of fame,  
And love of truth, and all that makes a man.

3. Manliness is a great word; it is a many-sided word; but in general, we have this feeling about it, when we use it with emphasis—that it is an idealizing word. It is a word that will not suffer us to stay down among the small actualities of the manly character as known to us; but it continually points us up and away from the small actualities towards the grand possibilities of the manly character which we hope may sometime be known to us. The word manliness, perhaps, is greater and richer in noble attributes than was any one real specimen of manliness that we have ever looked upon with these eyes of ours. Nevertheless, when we think of true manliness, we are not content with the discouraging real, we lift ourselves up towards the inspiring ideal; and we begin to place before our eyes, one by one, all those qualities that we can think of as going to the formation of a noble, strong, splendid, and complete man. The manly man, we say—why, that is the ideal man; that is the man, not as he is, perhaps, but as he ought to be, as he may be, as he will be.

What are the attributes of this complete man, which St. Paul may be supposed to have had in mind when he exhorted us to act like one? There should be no difficulty in answering this question. The very word which St. Paul used is one the exact meaning of which is still perfectly well known. For our phrase in four words, "Quit you like men," he used a single word, a verb formed from the familiar noun for *man*. The primary meaning of that noun was simply man as distinct from woman; its secondary meaning was man as a person of mature years, in contrast with a child; and then, for its third and supreme meaning, the word broadened and blossomed into the large conception of man as a being possessed of intelligence, wisdom, moral light and force, and a spiritual nature, in contrast with creatures of inferior order who are devoid of these endowments. So when St. Paul said to the little group of Christians at Corinth, environed by the spiritual perils of that most corrupt pagan city, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men," he very

likely charged that last word with all the ennobling and stimulating meanings which in the usage of poets and historians and orators it already had. For long before St. Paul's time the word had been often used, somewhat as he used it, as a word to spur and inspire men to great and worthy and difficult deeds. In Homer and Herodotus and in Xenophon the word comes up again and again, when some great chieftain, at a moment of danger, in the presence of some grand or tremendous duty, just turns round to his followers and tells them to remember that they are men, and to act accordingly. Of course, St. Paul must have charged the word with richer meanings than they did, by as much as his conception of the spiritual range and possibility of man's nature was grander than theirs; but the basis of his appeal was just the same as theirs.

In the first place, then, if in any respect a man is expected to have more courage and strength than a woman, let him act as becomes a man. Here the protest is against effeminacy. Secondly, if in any respect a grown man is expected to have more intelligence, wisdom, force, self-control, or fortitude than a mere child, let him act as becomes a man. Here the protest is against puerility. But, unquestionably, the great meaning with which the word is charged, in the Apostle's use of it, is its third and consummate meaning. Men are to act as creatures having reason, conscience, the power of choice, and the measureless possibilities of the immortal life, and not like creatures of mere instinct, impulse, and irresponsibility. Here the protest is against brutishness or animalism, existence unregulated by intelligent and conscientious self-direction. Therefore, taking this as the Apostle's conception of manliness—namely, character expressing itself in a life steered by principle—let us look at some of those forms of principle by which the manly life will be steered.

(1) *Magnanimity*.—Magnanimity is the principle of taking the large-minded view of things rather than the small-minded view. It is this principle woven into the texture of any human life which gives to it, however lowly it may be, true elevation and dignity; which enables its possessor to meet whatever comes with a tranquil and firm spirit; which raises him above anything so petty as revenge; which prompts him to disdain injustice and meanness, and leads him to task himself and to sacrifice himself



for noble ends. Accordingly, whatever in us is small, paltry, narrow, low; whatever tends to warp and contract us; whatever is stingy, greedy, miserly, selfish, jealous, morbid, is just so far a diminution of our manliness. And every vocation or method of culture which tends merely to sharpen certain less noble faculties of our nature, such as calculation, shrewdness, cunning, acquisitiveness, needs to be met by the deliberate cultivation of the faculties which will correct this tendency and broaden our grasp and handling of things.

¶ "Abraham," says Charles Kingsley, "was a prince in manners and a prince in heart." The Hittites partly divined his secret. His personality was grandly impressive to them. He rose in uncrowned sovereignty above them all, the strongest, noblest, gentlest man; and they saw that he was a prince of God's own making. He owed his power and charm, not so much to natural endowments as to the transforming and ennobling influence of Divine grace. Great aspirations and ideals created his great character. He kept company with God till he became a partaker of the Divine nature. Beginning as a man of God, he ended as a prince of God. True religion develops the highest kind of manhood. Under its influence a common man becomes princely in soul, unconsciously regnant among his fellow-men, and does the most common things in a noble, gentle, royal spirit. Being to God what the wax is to the seal, he is stamped with the image of God.

Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,  
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.<sup>1</sup>

¶ It is news to some people that manliness is a matter of culture rather than of fate. These are the people who confuse manliness with manhood. Their view is that in the great drama of humanity some of us are cast for male parts and some of us for feminine characters; and since none can determine his own sex, therefore manliness is a matter over which we have no control. They are by no means entirely wrong; and yet they are not right. It is not ours to say whether we shall or shall not be men. It is ours to say whether we shall be manly. For manliness is a matter of quality. There are many kinds of men, and it is only worth while being the best kind. To be the best of anything a man must take himself in hand. He must culture and discipline himself with the help of God. In other words, he must set his will towards manliness. He must know what he

<sup>1</sup> J. Strachan, *Hebrew Ideals*, i. 180.



wants, he must know how to get it; he must count as nothing the pains of progress. The fact is that manhood is only potential manliness. Yet where there is manhood there is always the possibility of manliness. Temperament is bias, but not destiny. Will and vision will always open a road from manhood to manliness.<sup>1</sup>

(2) *Sincerity*.—Another principle by which the manly life is steered is sincerity, sometimes described as ingenuousness, openness of heart, frankness, fairness, straightforwardness, honesty of nature through and through. The manly man will surely be controlled by this principle. The manly man is not double-tongued, or a hypocrite, or a trickster. The manly man is the upright man, the straightforward man, or, to use a new but most expressive phrase, he is the square man. When we hear of a piece of brilliant and successful sharp practice in politics, in law, in stock speculation, is it not our first tendency rather to smile admiringly over the expert achievement than to brood seriously over a certain ignoble something in it which taints the whole glittering transaction and the person who executes it? For there is nothing manly about trick-playing. How refreshing it is to see a man who never has an object of which he need be ashamed, and who marches towards his object without dodging, indirection, or stealth!

¶ No meanness, hypocrisy, or dishonesty, whether on the part of rich or poor, could escape the rigorous censure of "that terrible Thoreau," as his acquaintances called him; nor would he waste on thriftless applicants one cent of the money which he had earned by his own conscientious labours. He maintained sincerity to be the chief of all virtues. "The old mythology," he wrote, "is incomplete without a god or a goddess of sincerity, on whose altars we might offer up all the products of our farms, our workshops, and our studies. This is the only panacea."<sup>2</sup>

¶ Trevelyan speaks of "that ingrained sincerity of character" for the sake of which his party would have followed Lord Althorp to the death.<sup>3</sup>

¶ During Mr. Gladstone's last tenure of office as Prime Minister a clergyman, whose only opportunity of knowing Mr. Gladstone had been through the not too trustworthy descriptions

<sup>1</sup> J. G. Stevenson, in *Youth and Life*, 1.

<sup>2</sup> H. S. Salt, *Henry David Thoreau*, 122.

<sup>3</sup> *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, 260.

of hostile critics, happened to say in the presence of Dean Church that he believed Mr. Gladstone was a thoroughly insincere man. The Dean was sitting in his chair when the remark was made, but he instantly rose, his face even paler than it usually was, and he said, evidently with the strongest suppression of personal feeling: "Insincere! Sir, I tell you that to my knowledge Mr. Gladstone goes from communion with God to the great affairs of State." It was high testimony to be given to any man, but highest of all when we remember who gave it.<sup>1</sup>

This is Love's nobility,—  
 Not to scatter bread and gold,  
 Goods and raiment bought and sold;  
 But to hold fast his simple sense,  
 And speak the speech of innocence,  
 And with hand, and body, and blood,  
 To make his bosom-counsel good.  
 For he that feeds men serveth few;  
 He serves all who dares be true.<sup>2</sup>

(3) *Self-control*.—Manliness is self-mastery. Any fool, the weakest, dullest, paltriest that ever was, can make a drunkard or a debauchee. There is no human clay so vile, no sludge and scum of humanity so despicable, but out of it you may make an effeminate corrupter or lying schemer; but it takes God's own gold to make a man. No lacquer work, no tinsel suffices for the cherubim of the sanctuary. They must be hammered out of pure gold, seven times purified in the fire. From whom, it has been asked, does the inspiration descend on us? Is it not from the central figures of the great tragedies of humanity; from the creators of law, from the avengers of wrong, from the martyrs of right, from the missionaries of mercy, from the Pass of Thermopylae, from the self-dedication of the Decii, from the fires of Smithfield, from the waters of the Solway, yea! from the cross of Calvary? And he who will not take up that cross cannot be a true man; he cannot be Christ's disciple.

Every man finds in himself two sets of tendencies—one coarse, the other fine; the one gross and animal, the other spiritual and noble; one set allying him to the beasts that perish, the other allying him to the angels of God and to God Himself. Now, every man's life is going to be habitually controlled by one or

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Letters of Dean Church*, 304.

<sup>2</sup> Emerson.

the other of these sets of tendencies, or he is going to vacillate in a helpless, rudderless way between the two. But what will the manly man do about it? This he will do. He will not vacillate; he will not drift rudderless, water-logged, helpless. No; he will decide firmly between these two sets of tendencies; he will make his choice, and he will choose to have his life habitually controlled by his finer instincts rather than by his coarser ones; he will elect as his master tendencies those which are pure and ennobling rather than those which are low and degrading; he will resolve that within the domain of his personality the soul shall be king, not the body; that conscience and intelligence shall rule, and not the mob of his animal lusts and passions. With him the decision simply comes to this: the body shall obey the soul, the soul shall not be degraded to the task of obeying the body.

¶ If one is alive, there will be much in him which needs control, and yet is not going to submit without a struggle. It takes a practised hand to manage a pair of high-spirited horses so that they will not run away; and he would be a phenomenal charioteer who could drive wild beasts *tandem* and keep them under the rein together. This is the kind of task which ardent natures have to face. As compared with some primitive peoples, we have lost in frankness and gained in outward decorum, because we hide objectionable eccentricities from public view. But the human heart is still a curious menagerie. Though the animals may be pretty well tamed in the cage of civilization, it does not follow that their rougher instincts are destroyed. A good many different selves often seem to be included in the self. How shall we bind them into a real unity?

When shall we lay

The ghost of the brute that is walking and haunting us yet  
and be free?

This is the great problem of life.<sup>1</sup>

(4) *Courage*.—Another principle by which the manly life is steered is courage. As to this thing called courage, people sometimes distinguish between physical courage and moral courage. If there be such a thing as physical courage apart from moral courage, we have not very frequent use for it in civilized life.

<sup>1</sup> W. T. Herridge, *The Orbit of Life*, 65.

Against physical danger, as proceeding from the violence of others, society protects us; we seldom need to be at the trouble of protecting ourselves. Physical courage is the virtue of barbarism; the virtue of civilization is moral courage. The courage most needed in civilized society, at almost every hour of our lives, is the courage of opinion; the courage of our faiths and our convictions.

¶ Once, in some American city, there was held a densely crowded mass-meeting of slave-holders. Shouts of applause and enthusiasm marked the words of these champions of bondage, and they thundered forth the plausible sophisms of perverted Scriptures which defended their covenants with death. And one of the orators exclaimed, in the face of that menacing and raging meeting: "I should like to see an Abolitionist now; I should like to see an Abolitionist show his face here." Then a short figure was seen thrusting its way to the front, and, standing up before these raging defenders of wickedness alone, Theodore Parker shouted out to the raging multitude, "I am an Abolitionist!" It required nobler courage to do that than to fight a battle.<sup>1</sup>

¶ I say it deliberately, from long observation, that I regard cowardice as a capital defect in a young man. I have really more hopes of a fool than of a coward. I am never sure that a coward will tell the truth. I tremble at every temptation that he encounters, lest he may succumb. I fear for every opposition that he meets, lest he may be carried away with it.<sup>2</sup>

¶ I remember a remarkable conversion that occurred many years ago, when a work of grace was beginning in the parish over which my dear father was pastor. It happened that at that time there was a little band of men who were "great chums," and in a good position in society, as things went in the village; they were, in fact, regarded as influential men in the parish. One evening, they were all together at an hotel in the neighbouring town of Penzance, and, as men do on such occasions, they were drinking, and talking all kinds of nonsense, and not infrequently all kinds of profanity! One happened to say, "I wonder what the people are doing just now over at Pendeen." Another replied, "I suppose they are all getting converted as fast as possible." "Well," said one to a third, "I say, Captain B——, I will tell you what it is. When I see you converted, I will begin to think there is something in it," and there was a great roar of laughter

<sup>1</sup> Dean Farrar.

<sup>2</sup> R. B. Fairbairn, *College Sermons*, 67.

from the whole of the company at the thought of Captain B——'s conversion. The man thus referred to was, I may say, a mine agent, occupying a very influential position, and a large employer of labour. As the laughter died away, he rose from his seat. His companions did not notice how pale was his cheek. One thought only had flashed across his mind, when he heard his friend's remark, and the roar of laughter which it provoked. It was this—"Is my salvation so utterly hopeless that these worldly men can afford to regard me as they do? Do my companions think me altogether lost—for time and eternity? He started up and darted out of the room. The company thought they had offended him. Another moment, and he was in the hotel-yard, and crying to the ostler, "Saddle my horse!" He rode to his home as fast as he could ride. His wife could not understand what was wrong with him: he seemed so agitated. He took no food; but immediately set out for the place at which our meetings were being held. He was the last man we expected to see there. He came boldly forward and took his seat in front of the congregation, full in view of many whom he was employing. He had overcome his moral cowardice. My dear father gave out those lines of a well-known hymn of Wesley's—

Is here a soul that knows Thee not,  
Nor feels his want of Thee?  
A stranger to the blood which bought  
His pardon on the tree?  
Convince him now of unbelief,  
His desperate state explain.

And, as my father uttered these last words—"His desperate state explain!"—we heard a cry. This man was prostrated on his knees, and was sending up the thrilling prayer, before the eyes and ears of all—"God be merciful to me a sinner." I need hardly tell you that man went home rejoicing. But I may add that his conversion moved the whole neighbourhood, and was the commencement of the most remarkable work of God's grace that has ever occurred in those parts. Now, I call that manly, "quitting oneself like a man." I know he could not have done it if the Holy Spirit had not been striving within him. But then we often strive the other way; God calls, and we won't answer. God draws, and we won't yield; and the result is our hearts become like adamant, harder than flint.<sup>1</sup>

¶ "I asked Kang Yu Wei, who has studied the Gospels profoundly, what seemed to him the most striking quality in Jesus.

<sup>1</sup> Canon Hay Aitken.



He answered, somewhat to my surprise, that what appealed to him most, in the personality of Jesus, was His courage."<sup>1</sup>

And who the bravest of the brave;  
 The bravest hero ever born?  
 'Twas one who dared a felon's grave,  
 Who dared to breathe the scorn of scorn.  
 Nay, more than this: when sword was drawn,  
 And vengeance waited for His word,  
 He looked with pitying eyes upon  
 The scene, and said, "Put up thy sword."  
 O God! could man be found to-day  
 As brave to do, as brave to say?

"Put up thy sword into its sheath,"  
 Put up thy sword, put up thy sword!  
 By Kedron's brook thus spoke beneath  
 The olive-trees our valiant Lord,  
 Spoke calm and kinglike. Sword and stave  
 And torch and stormy men of death  
 Made clamour. Yet He spake not save  
 With loving word and patient breath  
 The peaceful olive boughs beneath,  
 "Put up thy sword within its sheath."

#### IV.

##### BE STRONG.

It would seem, at least at first sight, as if only an artificial distinction could be drawn between those two injunctions, "Quit you like men," "Be strong." But, looking more closely into the meaning of the words, we find that, not only are they not synonymous, but they do not even overlap. The Greek word translated "Quit you like men," a word which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, has an obvious and definite meaning. It is an appeal to self-respect, and a call to us to show forth our moral strength. The word translated "Be strong," on the other hand, in the only three other passages in which it is used, definitely refers to a different kind of strength. Twice it is used of our Lord Himself growing strong in spirit, and once it is used by St. Paul in the Epistle to the Ephesians, in the

<sup>1</sup> *Hibbert Journal*, October 1908, p. 22.



phrase, "Strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." The word thus becomes almost synonymous with another favourite word of St. Paul's, constantly translated by the English "strengthened," or "made strong," and always with reference to Divine strength. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." It refers definitely to that strength which made St. Paul himself strong for his work, even as spiritual heroes in all ages out of weakness have been made strong.

1. Let us, then, live in no doubt of what is strength and what is weakness. It is strength to will and to do; it is weakness to desire and not to do; to wish and not to will; to wish to break a habit and still to live in it; to wish to fix the thoughts and let them wander; to wish for the command of a faculty and to acquire no efficient use of it. And strength is not the vehement impulse of one part of us, but the final consent of all that is in us. It is not in the tenderness of a yielding man; nor in the resignation of a cold one; nor in the prudence of a selfish man; nor in the open-handedness of a spendthrift. The tender must be firm; the resigned, loving; the prudent, generous; the charitable, self-denying. It was seen in Christ when the morning of His greatest glory dawned upon Him—watching in trembling and in prayer—in His humility testing His weakness, and collecting His strength in God. Remember what He said to the disciples, who all failed Him in that great crisis, not because their hearts were evil, but simply because their *wills* were feeble: "What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

"Quit you like men, be strong." Yes, strength will come:  
 Who weeps at night will fight as well to-morrow;  
 'Tis good to stand a-wrestling with the world;  
 He loses much who knows not care nor sorrow;  
 'Tis good all day to keep the foe abreast,  
 'Tis good at night to fall on dreamless rest.

2. "Be strong."—The original means rather "Become strong." What is the use of telling men to "*be* strong"? It is a waste of words, in nine cases out of ten, to say to a weak man, "Pluck

up your courage, and show strength." But is it so vain to tell a poor, weak creature like me to become strong, when you can point me to the source of all strength, in that spirit "of power and of love and of a sound mind"? We have only to take our weakness there to have it stiffened into strength; as people put bits of wood into what are called "petrifying wells," which infiltrate into them mineral particles, which do not turn the wood into stone, but make the wood as strong as stone. So my manhood, with all its weakness, may have filtered into it Divine strength, which will brace me for all needful duty, and make me more than conqueror through Him that loved me. Then, it is not mockery and cruelty, vanity and surplusage, to preach, "Quit you like men; be strong, and be a man"; because if we will observe the plain and not hard conditions, strength will come to us according to our day, in fulfilment of the great promises: "My grace is sufficient for thee," and "my strength is made perfect in weakness."

What is that Divine strength which is to transform our natural and human strength? In one word, it is "Christ in us," the same Divine power which secretly fought in and with the noblest efforts of humanity outside the Jewish and the Christian Church. Only now its nature is revealed; more than that, there is revealed to us the means by which that Divine strength may be gained—the channels of communication have been thrown open to us. The end and aim of the religious life has been made clear—likeness to God, Christ formed in us, ourselves transformed, our lower self subdued, our higher self taken into God. "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

¶ It is sometimes said, You tell us to be manly, and yet you bid us subject ourselves to a higher power working in us. Religious people are so weak. They have no self-reliance. They are but feeble creatures, after all, with all their boasted strength. How can you expect men to set before themselves, as an end, what, disguise it as you will, is self-surrender, which means renouncing all that we admire as manly in us? I will answer by some negative instances sufficient, at all events, to prove that surrendering one's self to the will of God, resting on His strength, is a source not of weakness but of power. Was St. Paul feeble and nerveless because his will was surrendered to the will of

Christ? Did he speak less powerfully, or run less certainly, or fight as "one that beateth the air," because he had learned to say, "Not I, but Christ in me"? Are enthusiasts of all ages and all creeds, fanatics, if you will, wanting in force and energy, because they believe themselves to be only passive instruments in the hands of some mightier power?<sup>1</sup>

3. *Our strength must be of the whole man.*—Strength of character is not to be obtained through the intellect or through the feelings alone. Either of these exclusively followed can at the best only give principles of conduct and action which satisfy the individual, and the practical result of such a purely individual possession can only be bigotry, prejudice, narrowness or fanaticism, not real strength.

That man is unmanly, for he falls far short of man's perfection, who exults only in his bodily strength, and wastes in useless, idle, often in cruel and degrading pursuits, time and vigour that are due to society, due to his fellow-men, due to himself. Equally, nay, more, does he fall short, who as a narrow-minded pedant looks out upon man's varied and ever-varying life, and measures human nature by his own scanty measure, and, as it seethes and tosses at his feet, applies to it his dull formula and thinks he has thereby solved its meaning and hushed its voice for ever. Unmanly too, deeply unmanly is he who, with a morbid sensitiveness that he cannot assuage, is always peering into himself and tenderly nursing his own feelings, and greedily clamouring for the gratification of his own emotions, who cannot face life on equal terms with others, but is constantly brooding over his shocked self-respect, or injured self-love, or ill-requited affection; who is always demanding from life as a gift that happiness which is accorded only as the prize of effort, and is wringing his hands in sulky despair that he is after all treated even as other men are, though he thinks himself much more exquisitely sensitive than they.

True strength of character is not attained by great exertions, but by unity of life. Nothing is more common than great force in some one direction—in some one inclination, passion, or faculty; nothing is more rare than a strong man, if by the man you mean the whole man, the symmetry of our entire being,

<sup>1</sup> A. L. Moore, *Some Aspects of Sin*, 49.

the frame of our life complete through that which every joint supplieth. The men whom the world takes for strong are for the most part only one-sided—just as to most minds the half of a truth is far more telling than the whole of it, and to modify the impression by giving the other half will seem to round it off to comparative tameness. Vehement language coming out of half knowledge and a blind impulse seems fraught with more vigour than full, just, discriminating speech; and a man who sees every side of a subject will appear more feeble than the man who, because he sees but one side of it, can speak impetuously and strike with unqualified force. How easy would it be to be strong in some one direction or proclivity of our nature, or in the vigorous prosecution of single interests! How easy, for instance, to be strong in the conduct of worldly business, if we might settle down our whole powers upon it, and had never to lift our soul from its pursuit! How difficult is it to combine this with every other sentiment that becomes a man—to infuse into this vigour of business the fervent spirit serving God, so that, whilst the hand of diligence maketh rich, the heart and its treasures have no earthliness in them! How easy might it be to be strong in religion, in the devotion of our souls to holiness and truth, if duty centred in the private thoughts and could be carried on in solitude; if it required no struggle with conflicting things, no trained wisdom to discern our way amid a thousand complications; if asceticism were strength; if the anchorite might go to his cell, and had finished his Christian work when prayers, aspirations, and unearthly desires had floated in ghostly array through the uninterrupted meditations of his spirit! All that is easy to any one who chooses to give himself to it. But how difficult is it to be strong in a real devotedness to goodness, purity, and truth, amid the contradiction of circumstance, and the opposing ways of men; to shape the forms of life after models in the soul; to transfer unmutilated our own sentiments into our own demeanour; to live with men as they are and part with no ideal; to lose no vision, disturb no fountain of peace; to be strong in Christ's interpretation of strength; a physician among the sick; whole among the unsound; spiritual among the worldly; living with God in the midst of crowds; full of love and thought for the world when alone with God

(1) *Strength of body*.—There is not, perhaps, much tendency in the present day to return to that utter despising of our body which was so marked a characteristic of some schools of mediæval asceticism. It is enough therefore to observe that the only word in the New Testament which could seem to give countenance to such a thought is that expression, “our vile body,” which is a painful and unfortunate mistranslation of the Greek. The word is really, “this body of our humiliation,” as contrasted with that glorified body in which we shall exist when the Church militant is past, and we join the completed Church triumphant in heaven. Purity and (where God gives health) strength of body seemed ever to St. Paul one ingredient in his estimate of true manliness. What can exceed the fervour of that prayer that “your whole spirit and soul *and body* be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”?

(2) *Strength of mind*.—Be strong also in soul, or intellect; for in this sense, and not in our more modern and less accurate sense, does St. Paul use this word “soul,” distinguishing it from our “spirit.” “Be not children in understanding,” says the Apostle, “but in understanding be men.” If the religion of Christ teaches us to be brave in body, so also it teaches us to be brave and strong in intellect.

(3) *Strength of spirit*.—It is through the higher spiritual life that God acts upon the other parts of man’s nature; and it is by that spiritual power that the whole man will be purified and exalted. The influence of the spirit of the man, acted on and illuminated by the Holy Spirit of God, will raise him to the true dignity of manhood in all his nature. There is nothing “manly”—quite the contrary—in being irreligious or indifferent. If there be one word of truth in all the Gospel story of what Christ has done for us, surely it is the meanest, most unmanly thing on earth to treat that heroic self-sacrifice with active scorn, or with still more wounding chilling indifference.

¶ Like many others, I imagined a man was some one who would shine in all athletic games, and make for himself a body that should be so strong that people would point to him and say: “That’s a man.” Therefore when a sufficient measure of success came to me, in a financial way, I gave myself to athletics. I longed for the day when my name should be quoted in the paper as a successful athlete. How I worked at it, and how hard



I trained! At last a measure of success came my way, and with the glamour of the laurel wreath upon my brow, I cut the account out of the paper and sent it home. I thought, now my father and mother will know that their son is a man! How hungrily I waited for the answering letter of congratulation, and with what eagerness I broke the seal when at last it came! Imagine my chagrin when I read: "Your mother and I are very glad that you have attained to such success as an athlete. We are very proud of you, but remember that if you were to become the finest athlete that ever lived, you would only be a *Third of a Man*."

There was nothing for it but for me at once to tackle my brain, whilst keeping up my athletics. From that moment I began to study, in fact almost to go to school again. I devoured books, I studied deep subjects, I tried to become an intellectual person. At last I read a paper before some society, which was reported in one of the papers, with some flattering criticisms, which were sent home. Another letter came in which my father said: "Your mother and I are much pleased that you are letting our prayers be answered, and that you are looking after your mind as well as your body. Remember, however, that supposing you become physically perfect, and so educate yourself that you shall have a well-stored and well-equipped brain, you will then only be *Two-Thirds of a Man*."<sup>1</sup>

## V.

## BE TENDER.

"Let all that ye do be done in love."

1. There is a singular contrast between the first four of these exhortations and the last. The former ring sharp and short like pistol-shots; the last is of gentler mould. The former sound like the word of command shouted by an officer along the ranks; and there is a military metaphor running all through them. The foe threatens to advance; let the guards keep their eyes open. He comes nearer; prepare for the charge, stand firm in your ranks. The battle is joined; "Quit you like men"—strike a man's stroke—"be strong." And then all the apparatus of warfare is put away out of sight, and the captain's word of command is softened into the Christian teacher's exhortation:

<sup>1</sup> G. Clarke, *True Manhood, Womanhood*, 10.



“Let all that you do be done in love.” For love is better than fighting, and is stronger than swords.

2. And yet, although there is a contrast here, there is also a sequence and connection. No doubt these exhortations, which are St. Paul's last word to that Corinthian Church on which he had lavished in turn the treasures of his manifold eloquence, indignation, argumentation, and tenderness, reflected the deficiencies of the people to whom he was speaking. They were schismatic and factious to the very core, and so they needed the exhortation to be left last in their ears, as it were, that everything should be done in love. They were ill-grounded in regard to the very fundamental doctrines of the faith, as all St. Paul's argumentation about the resurrection proves, and so they needed to be bidden to “stand fast in the faith.” Their slothful carelessness as to the discipline of the Christian life, and their consequent feebleness of grasp of the Christian verities, made them loose-braced and weak in all respects, and incapacitated them for vigorous warfare.

¶ An example of a splendid Christian manhood is furnished by the career of Sir Titus Salt. It was my privilege recently to visit Saltaire, near Bradford, the model village of which he was the founder, and to see there in some measure how much a single well-spent life may do in brightening the lot of others. The great mill, which is built in the Italian style, the dwellings for the work-people, the almshouses, the schools, the church, the public park, and other facilities for the culture and the elevation of the people, are proofs of a large intelligence and a loving heart. He came to his grave in 1876 at the age of seventy-three; but his memory lives as that of one whose motto was—“Love and Serve.”<sup>1</sup>

¶ A story is told of Marston Moor for which there is as good evidence as for many things that men believe. A Lancashire squire of ancient line was killed fighting for the king. His wife came upon the field the next morning to search for him. They were stripping and burying the slain. A general officer asked her what she was about, and she told him her melancholy tale. He listened to her with great tenderness, and earnestly besought her to leave the horrid scene. She complied, and calling for a trooper, he set her upon the horse. On her way she inquired

<sup>1</sup> R. S. Duff, *Pleasant Places* 119.

the name of the officer, and learned that he was Lieutenant-General Cromwell.<sup>1</sup>

¶ I've noticed it often among my own people around Snowfield, that the strong, skilful men are often the gentlest to the women and children; and it's pretty to see 'em carrying the little babies as if they were no heavier than little birds. And the babies always seem to like the strong arm best.<sup>2</sup>

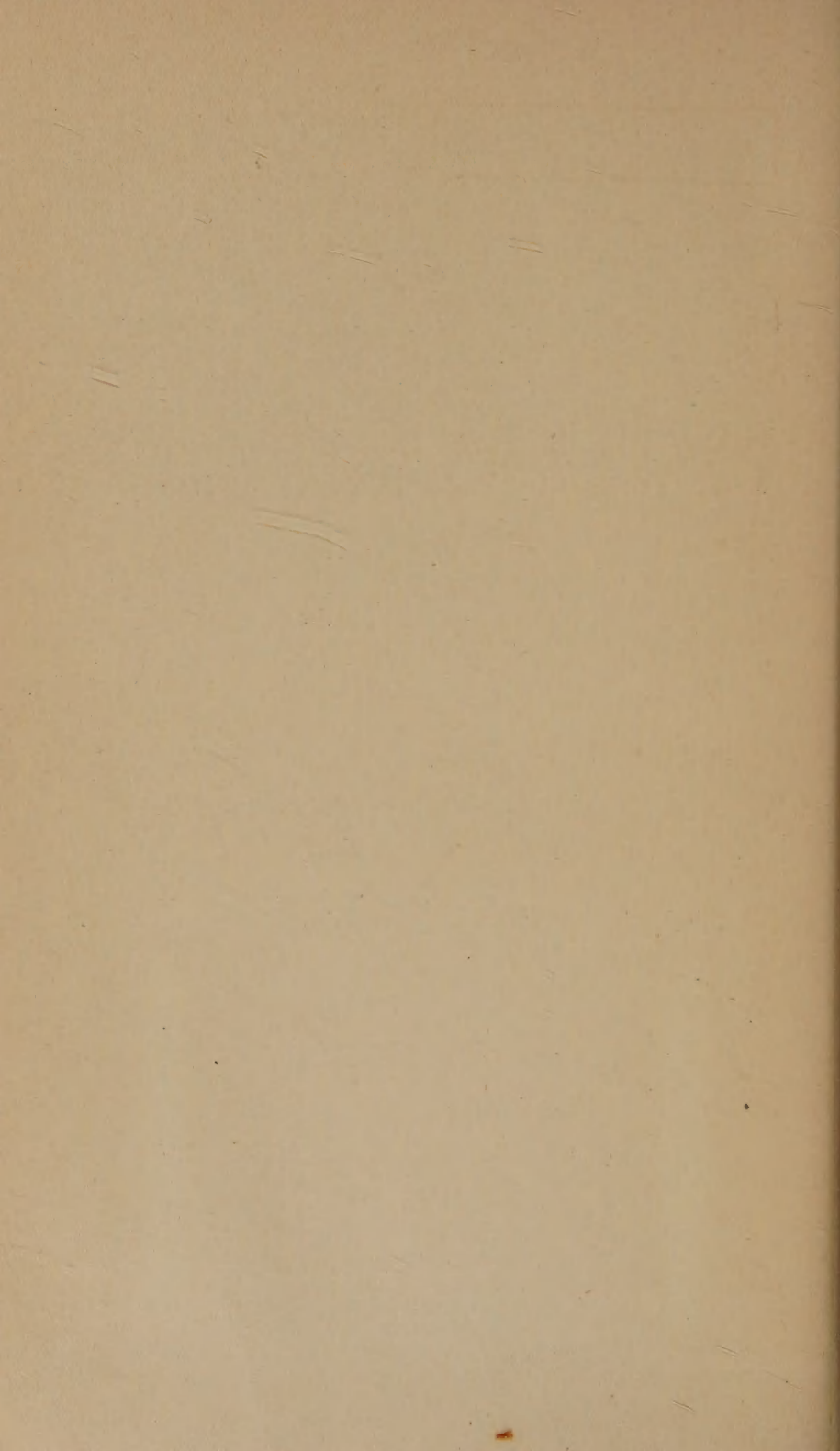
¶ Burne-Jones soon caught Ruskin's enthusiasm for Luini, and some years later advised a friend who was travelling in Italy to "hunt him out everywhere. Never were any faces so perfect; for they are perfect like Greek ones, and *have fourteen hundred years of tenderness and pity added.*"<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. Morley, *Oliver Cromwell*, 154.

<sup>2</sup> Dinah Morris, in *Adam Bede*.

<sup>3</sup> *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, i. 248.





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